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GREAT THOUGHTS

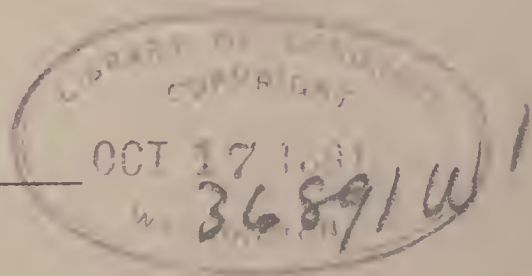
OF

THE BIBLE

BY THE

REV. JOHN REID,

Author of "VOICES OF THE SOUL ANSWERED IN GOD," "FOOTPRINTS OF SORROW,"
"CHRIST AND HIS RELIGION," ETC.



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P R E F A C E.

"THE Bible is not such a book as man would have made, if he could ; or could have made, if he would." Its great thoughts speak to the soul as no thoughts of men ever speak. They have a revealing power ; and the awakened mind perceives divinity in them. The Bible is the world's book, and the world is in the book. Its treasures will not fail while the earth endures : even in heaven new riches will be found in it.

As the chief thoughts of the Bible relate to an economy of grace, we have made that economy the centre. If it be true that "without absolute grasp of the whole subject, there is no good painting," so without absolute grasp of the one theme of Scripture, there is no sound writing. Rationalism never can interpret the Bible. As the great thoughts of God's Book are remarkable for their variety, persons may write upon its chief topic and yet all the chapters be different in *form* from ours. We have simply made

a selection from the mass of Scripture material, and have just gone so far into the subject as not to be tiresome. The volume could easily be made larger, but whether it would fit these busy times any better on that account is a question. Compact thought is the want of the hour. Windy eloquence strikes the ear, but not the soul. Truth comes to us by weight, not by measure.

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PART I.

GREAT THOUGHTS OF THE BIBLE WHICH PERTAIN TO CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAVIOUR.

WE wish to look chiefly at the *inward* excellencies of the Saviour in the chapters that follow. In the lives of Christ that have appeared there is an excess of that which is outward; even the manners, customs, and the country itself, of the Jewish people have been sketched. All this is valuable, only that the heart of the Great Heart has not been sufficiently noticed.

CHAPTER I.

INDIVIDUALITY OF THE SAVIOUR.

REVOLUTIONS that startle men by their suddenness had preparations in human souls. All great events have their preludes. Before the sun is seen in the morning he is heralded. It is no less true, however, that the grandest thoughts come forth from a divine darkness. Mystery fringes the most exalted truths. That which can be seen at a glance is only the stepping-stone to something higher.

Although the idea of Christ comes from Christ, it seems none the less to lie at the foundation of the deepest thinking. Whether one treats of the philosophy of history, or of philosophy itself, Christ is there. He may not always be there in his true nature; still he is there. He is the Wonderful Presence adored by some, rejected by others, praised by all. Those who do not want him think of him; his radiance skirts their darkness, and his voice echoes on the ear as the storm sweeps by.

In the most complete sense, Jesus was a con-

secrated person. His whole being and life were set apart to an unwonted service. He seemed not to belong to himself, and yet no one was so much himself as he was. He worked always from his own nature. He was literally Christocentric.

Thousands of men seem to be cast in the same mould, their individuality destroyed by a dominant materialism. In certain organizations the masses are swayed by some potent chief. We even notice a kind of education and a kind of religion that are shaped by a supreme human authority. On the other hand, there are souls that will neither submit to man, nor to God. It is a fair question whether there is a single one of our fallen race that possesses a true individuality. In Christ we behold an individuality that has stood its ground against all opposing influences.

The apostles had a more complete knowledge of the Saviour after he had left them than when he was with them. We behold him better at this distance of time than those who saw him day by day. They were in the midst of a process, and could not understand it: we see the process as ended, and therefore all is clear. We have also the additional light of the entire New Testament and the additional evidence from Christianity during eighteen centuries,

and consequently we must have a better knowledge of Christ than the men who saw his miracles and heard his words.

The Evangelists have been able to do a difficult piece of work. They have made the individuality of Christ distinct by forcing into the background their own individuality. They manifest no self-consciousness in the act of writing, but they do show a clear consciousness of the Saviour. They do not charm us with their *opinions* of Christ: *facts* are allowed to tell what he is. They seem to be under a law of limitation, guided and governed by the Spirit of God, that thus they may truthfully reveal the Redeemer of men. The fewness of their words, the simplicity of their style, and their singleness of aim give us the photograph of Jesus for all coming time.

Unless we grasp the true idea of the individuality of Christ at the beginning, his mission upon earth will not be understood. His individuality is altogether peculiar. He is a *divine-human person*. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." He was not a human body animated by the Deity, neither was he a real man filled with God, but "he was God and man in two distinct natures, and yet one person forever." Men can reach a high standing by reason of supernatural aid granted

to them, but their standing never can be the same as that of the God-man. However much also we may emphasize the humanity of Christ, there will still be something about that humanity that is not found in the highest saint on earth or in heaven. The fault of most of the lives of Christ that have been written is in making his humanity so intensely human that the divinity seems not to touch it.

While the incarnation gives us the basis of the individuality of Christ, another characteristic is needed in order to complete that individuality. *Why* did the Son of God assume human nature? The only reason that harmonizes with Scripture is the one, that he assumed human nature for the purpose of saving lost men. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Thus the individuality of Christ is revealed to us in the statement, that he is the *divine-human* SAVIOUR.

"I have sometimes remarked in the presence of great works of art," says Mr. Emerson, "how much a certain property contributed to the effect which gives life to the figures, and to the life an irresistible truth. This property is the hitting, in all the figures we draw, the right

centre of gravity. I mean, the placing the figures firm upon their feet; making the hands grasp, and fastening the eyes on the spot where they should "look."* The *cross* is the centre of gravity for the God-man. Christ is *redemption*. He has an experience which connects itself with every human being from first to last. There is not even *one soul* that is outside of his experience. The race has an existence because the Saviour has an existence. The truth which he announced, the religion which he propagated, and the model of righteousness which he exhibited, are for the whole world of man. Not even the highest creaturely intelligence has any such experience as Christ. His individuality overshadows and underlies all other individuals. We are bounded in our experience. Christ has a universal consciousness, a universal personality, a universal life. At the very point where he seems to come nearest to us, he is yet far away; he is near and remote at the same time. The common in Christ is uncommon. When we imagine that we behold a train of excellencies quite well defined, the train branches off into vastness, and we cannot measure it. The stream of glory becomes a lake, the lake an ocean, whose shore we cannot see and whose depth

* "Essays," First Series, p. 208.

we cannot sound. It will be true forever that Christ is known, and yet unknown.

We are accustomed to say that the effulgence of the Diety was softened by the incarnation. We may even take another step and affirm that both the human and the divine in Christ were held back to a certain extent, lest they should overwhelm men by their power. The glory of the Saviour in heaven is different from the glory of the Saviour on earth. It was not suitable to him, in his state of humiliation, that he should be encircled with that splendor which now encircles him in his state of exaltation. Once he gave full play to his complex being on the Mount of Transfiguration, and there flashed forth from him a light like that of the sun. This was a celestial glory which appeared for an hour, and then was lost in darkness. The cloud of glory and the voice of God sounding through it were so overpowering that the disciples "fell on their face, and were sore afraid." This was a divine manifestation in order to meet a purpose, and could not be repeated.

There was much in the life of Christ which resembled that of other men, and he might easily be lost sight of by thoughtless minds. He ate and drank, slept and dressed, was weary and hungry, like others. He spoke the com-

mon language of the people, worked at a trade for years, worshipped in the synagogue, and went to the temple during the great festivals, just as other Jews did. He did not assume the garb of a great philosopher. He did not teach men science and art. He made no special discovery in the realms of nature. The fact that his own brethren did not believe on him showed that there was a section of his life that was quite human. Even his goodness many a time flowed in a channel that would not attract earthly souls. It wanted a spiritual eye to see him, and that the people did not have.

The Redeemer is the only person who could completely harmonize the apparent contradictions of the government of God. A child sees much in a father that is perplexing, and a common soldier cannot grasp the plan of a great campaign. Upon the broad scale of eternity the most cultivated human being is but a child. Christ did not live upon the same plane that men live upon when they are looking at the intricacies of existence. He was on the mountain summit, and the field of vision was spread out before him; while man is at the bottom of the mountain and sees only a part, and is therefore confused. An infinite person, the trinity, creation out of nothing, the

problem of evil, never perplexed him. The contradictions of Scripture did not enter his mind. He found no need of theories. Indeed, it is worthy of notice that not a single hypothesis was ever proposed by Christ. His wisdom did not reveal itself in guessing. He faced the reality, and however tangled and twisted that might be to us, he found unity. Many a time he throws out great generalized statements which astonish us by their sweep, and which to this day we cannot fully explain, but to him they were clear as the light. He looks at events and at souls, at God and God's plan, at time and eternity, as no man does. His life was burdensome, painful, right in the midst of death, yet there is no evidence that he was hindered or harassed by the irreconcilable and mysterious.

When men start upon a new and great undertaking they have to feel their way, not being sure how things will turn out. They change now and then in order to meet the circumstances, and even fail when doing their best. If they should succeed, the success is not just as they expected at first. We find nothing like this in Christ. He had one great thought, and that one great thought was never changed. He went straight forward, when to the eyes of men it seemed as if he must be

mistaken. Peter at one time began to rebuke him, because certain revelations touching the future did not seem to Peter's mind to be suitable to such a person as Christ. It is safe to say that if the Saviour had unfolded his plan to the apostles at the beginning, they would have been completely overwhelmed, and would have thought that he was rash and unreasonable. They saw it little by little; then at last its meaning flashed upon them. Men who have before them a great undertaking are more or less anxious. They think carefully and consult with persons of experience about it. "Christ speaks as one who is sure of the compactness of his design; he is certain that no human obstacle can baulk its realization. He produces it simply without effort, without reserve, without exaggeration; he is calm, because he is in possession of the future, and sees his way clearly through its tangled maze. There is no proof, no distant intimation of a change or of a modification of his plan." *

We are to a great extent made by the past: Christ was an original character. To suppose that he was the ripe fruit of all previous development is assuredly a fancy and not a fact. It was not possible for the greatness of uni-

* Liddon, "The Divinity of Christ," p. 115. English ed.

versal man to end in him, because his greatness was of a kind that never had been seen before, and never would be seen again. His person and plan, character and kingdom, were all new. No legislator, hero, monarch, philosopher, or founder of a religion, ever struck upon his thought. "How was it possible for a man who embraced all the nations of the earth in the greatest love, and projected one of the most benevolent plans that ever sprung from a human mind, to derive his origin from a nation which despised all other nations, made hatred to them a religious duty, and considered it criminal to approach them or form connections with them? Here everything is new and incomprehensible; everything governed by strange laws. External circumstances and relations are constantly at variance with the disposition and feelings of Jesus, and produce in him effects directly the opposite to what they usually do in other cases. Under such circumstances, no human mind has ever developed such qualities. *If God was not in this man*, it is not easy to see how he became what he was; how he could possibly have acquired that heavenly dignity, greatness, and elevation, with which he stands forth unequalled and alone in the vast space of history, far surpassing in splendor all that is worthy of ad-

miration upon earth.”* Most certainly Christ came from the higher worlds, and was not in the line of our march. Although in certain things he seemed to be one of our number, he was yet in his chief characteristics out of our range. The Maker of the world was not made by the world. He came here with treasures which the earth needed, but received nothing in return. Yea, for his gifts he was crucified. He descended, but it was to lift up. Christ’s descending was *ascending*.

Humility was not just the same in Jesus as it is in us. The grace which goes by that name is in a great measure the feeling of beings who have sinned. The penitent man sinks because he has broken the divine law, because he feels unworthy, and because he is nothing and can claim nothing. Christ had no feeling of unworthiness, but he did have a high sense of worth. He never appeared small in his own eyes, as we appear small in ours. In what sense was he humble? When he stooped from the highest condition to the lowest by reason of pure love, that was his kind of humility. He had greatness, but he, so to speak, reduced himself in order to meet man, that man might rise from his littleness to be a partaker of the greatness of God. The opposite of pride with

* Reinhard’s “Plan of the Founder of Christianity,” p. 271.

us is humility, but the opposite of humility with Christ was greatness. Though sinless and divine, he was willing to be viewed as wicked, and in that way he manifested humility. We miss it exceedingly unless we view the humility of Christ as having a redemptive meaning.

The *prayers* of Jesus are in many respects different from ours. Indeed, considering that he was the one Being who could save men, we are somewhat surprised that he should pray at all; and if he had never prayed, we should have seen nothing out of the way. There is no account that he prayed with people at prayer meetings as we pray with each other. It is mentioned that he gave thanks in connection with food and when the sacrament of the Supper was instituted. "The Lord's Prayer" was used by his disciples, but never used by the Lord himself. Indeed, he could not use it, as he was sinless. There was a degree of retirement about the praying of Jesus. The night seemed the most suitable time. Away from the labors of the day and the presence of men, he could commune with the eternal Father. That wonderful prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John is to a great extent mediatorial. No human being could say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me

to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Our great Advocate did intercede for men, and in that particular his praying is like ours. He also prayed in the midst of intense pain, just as we do when suffering. While it is important to know how much Christ is like us, it is no less important to know how much he is unlike us.

The *mental pain* of Jesus was not the same as ours. The fact that he was sinless, and man is sinful, shows that the pain could not be the same in each. Man feels restless and dissatisfied, is troubled with guilt and remorse, looks to God and the future with fear, has the sense of a burden upon the heart and a feeling of disharmony, is tired without any toil and heart-sick in the midst of pleasure: Christ had no such experiences. His mental pain was foreign to him, the causes of it were outward, while our pain is from within. His sorrow and suffering were exceedingly sharp; all the sharper because he was holy. The agony was too great to be prolonged; the redemption price was so valuable that it enriched eternity. The word that expresses our mental pain is *unhappiness*. Christ suffered, but was that *suffering* of the same quality as *unhappiness*? We think not.

Mark now the fact of *reserved power* in the man Christ Jesus. He never goes to such a pitch in effort as to exhaust the contents of his soul, finding it necessary to replenish his mind by a season of solitary study. His whole career was extraordinary, and yet it was such without any ado. He was great without trying to be great. There was a certain quietness about his efforts, an air of repose that spread over him in the midst of his mightiest deeds, and so he flourished without any intellectual strain, no nervous impetuosity sending him ahead at the expense of vital force. The wealth of his nature flowed from him as the stream from its fountain, the rays from its sun, the creation from its God. To lay out one's powers for a great occasion is a sign of weakness. It shows that we have not at instant command just what we need. We have to collect our treasures and press them into one great hour; that one great hour measuring our ability at its highest pitch, while back of it is want and hunger. Nothing of this kind is seen in Christ.

Still, when we face the fact of redemptive suffering, the human nature of Jesus seemed pressed and strained as if it was compelled to bear the utmost that was possible. Sin is such a fearful evil that it demanded an expiation

which must rack mind and body. The words, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," show that he well-nigh reached the limit of human endurance. How much of reserved power there was in the *soul* of Jesus during his great agony we do not know. We only know that he conquered. Terrible would it have been for us if he had not conquered. If the divine in Christ had not been all around his human nature, bearing it up, it would seem as if that human nature must have given way.

There was a *pathetic* element which characterized the individuality of the Saviour. The beginning, middle, and end of his earthly career were suffused with pathos. His looks, speech, works, and prayers to God were pathetic. His very silence, his glance toward the heavens, his sigh that travelled through the darkness into the eternal light, his sorrow that sprung from love rather than from loss, were all touched with pathos. His farewell to his disciples, his agony in the garden, his manner before the elders and before Pilate, the crucifixion scene, were each pathetic. Apart, however, from the many instances of pathos that appear in his life, his very being was the most pathetic of all. His entire nature was a passion of suffering goodness. He carried the burdens of mankind. It is because of the

pathos which stamps his individuality that he has such a spiritual hold upon the race. The Christ of rationalism is cold in presence of the emotions. That which comes nearest to the heart is the most precious and lives the longest. Christianity will always *live*, just because the Son of God *died*.

CHAPTER II.

SURPRISES OF THE SAVIOUR.

CHRIST is many sided, and so he must be studied in a many-sided way in order to discover the wealth of his nature and character.

The time when God became man is a surprise. Why wait four thousand years before assuming human nature? As redemption held back the curse when Adam sinned, why might not the second Adam have appeared during the first age of the world? The race were to be schooled, and prophecy and providence were to do their part before "the fulness of time" came. When the incarnation should be, or whether there should be any incarnation at all, we cannot tell. The whole matter is a surprise.

It is a marvel that the Son of God became the Son of man in a stable. Even admitting that humiliation was to mark his life, we should have supposed that finer surroundings would have saluted the King of Glory when he came here. At the time the wise men visited him

he was still in lowly circumstances. They must have been surprised to find the new-born king without the least vestige of royalty. The thought might have entered their mind that they had been deceived, and that their long journey was fruitless. If they were thus tempted, they stood the test; for they presented their gifts to the infant sovereign and worshipped him. They may have been the first fruits of the Gentiles to Christ.

Jesus in the temple, at the age of twelve, provoked surprise. The doctors are astonished at his understanding and answers. Joseph and Mary are equally astonished when they hear him say, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" It has been noticed that these are the first recorded words spoken by Jesus. He had struck off the great thought of his life with just sufficient indefiniteness to make them think and wonder. The sentence was suitable to the point of development which Jesus had reached. It opened a divine chamber from which glory streamed, and then it was closed till years passed.

It is remarkable that the greater part of Christ's life is hidden from us. There is a blank from infancy to the age of twelve, and from twelve to the age of thirty. It is no doubt better for us that we should not be fully

acquainted with every item of the Saviour's experience. The unknown may teach us wisdom. The curious mind may be frivolous. A suitable distance from the Divine develops a finer reverence than an unsuitable nearness to the Divine.

Considering that Christ was sinless, it is strange that he presented himself to be baptized. John, indeed, felt that there was a degree of incongruity about it, for he remarked, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" The Son of God had assumed the duties that were obligatory upon man. Persons affirm that it makes no difference whether they are baptized or not, as the rite is merely secondary. It is certainly better for a man to be a follower of Christ than a follower of himself. "A soul," says Fenelon, "which sincerely desires to belong to God never looks to see whether a thing is *great* or *small*; it is enough for it to know that he for whose love it is done is infinitely great, and that it is his due to have all creation solely devoted to his glory." *

It may surprise easy-going people that Christ was so constant in his attendance upon the worship of the synagogue. Since he was holy, might he not have rested at home? No:

* "Selections," p. 17.

the positive institutions of God must be sustained; he must fulfil all righteousness. "He went therefore into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as his *custom* was." The synagogue was essentially the church of the Jews, and the Christian Church is modelled after it. If the Saviour of men felt under obligation to sustain public worship, much more should the men who expect to be saved be held to duty by a similar obligation.

The fulness of saving truth which comes forth in Christ's conversation with Nicodemus is surprising. Men of rationalistic tendency have praised the Sermon on the Mount because they did not find in it atoning characteristics; and yet, in the interview with the Jewish ruler which took place *before* the Sermon on the Mount was delivered, redemptive truth is unfolded with marked distinctness. Indeed, there is scarcely a chapter in the whole of the New Testament that is so suitable to read to a man who feels the need of salvation as the third chapter of John's Gospel. The necessity of a change of character effected by the Spirit of God and the equal necessity of faith in the Divine Redeemer are unfolded in clear language. Christ did more for the timid man who came to him by night, than he did for many who surrounded him in open day. There is a

law of progress in the unfolding of Christian doctrine; but the Great Teacher seemed to step aside from his usual course when he communicated to Nicodemus such a full revelation of the way to be saved.

The conversation of Jesus with the woman of Samaria has phases which surprise us. "The disciples marvelled that he talked with the woman." He revealed to her the past of her life, stated that he is the Messiah, and the founder of a religion for all mankind. She believes every word, and hastens to inform her neighbors, saying, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" The people are startled, and they hurry forward to see the noted person. They listen to his statements, they believe, and confess "that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." Not only is it strange that he should talk so freely to the Samaritan woman and her friends, considering that his plan was to confine his chief attention to the Jews, but it is doubly strange that he favored such people with a fuller knowledge of his person and work than he was accustomed to give to others. To know that he is "*the Saviour of the world*" is a truth that many did not grasp till after years of schooling.

That Jesus should select common men for

his apostles, and not the educated, is of the nature of a surprise. That eleven of those should be from the north, and only one from the south, namely, Judas, is also strange. Then why was Judas chosen at all? No satisfactory answer can be given. Perhaps his seeming readiness to do and to suffer gave him a standing, and so he was allowed to come in among the apostles. Sometimes persons unite with the church whose experience we are not quite sure about; but we give them the benefit of a doubt, and so receive them. Perhaps Judas entered the ranks of the apostles by a kind of choice that trembled. The apostles were typical of the Church of God, having the temperaments and spiritual characteristics of church members. Paul afterwards took the place of Judas, as if to make the apostolic college a better picture of the Church of the future.

Repulse is seen at different times in the life of Christ, and that surprises. A scribe wants to follow him. Jesus says plainly, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Such a statement was not encouraging. A man wants to attend to the filial duty of burying his father before he casts in his lot with the Saviour. The words are uttered,

“Let the dead bury their dead.” A rich youth wants to know what he shall do to inherit eternal life. He is told to go and sell all that he has and give to the poor. A Syro-Phenician woman pleads in behalf of her daughter. The Saviour answers her not a word. She repeats her request, and is again rejected. She will not, however, give up. The blessing is at last received, and the woman is praised. Repulse is a characteristic of the present system. It is seen in nature with its severity, in providence with its trials, in business with its fluctuations, in education with its discipline, in religion with its crosses. Many a one meets a rebuff at the very beginning of the Christian life. He who is earnest and persevering will come off conqueror. Repulse is designed to make us considerate, thorough, strong. The winter of time prepares for the summer of eternity.

The feeding of five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes is a surprise. The vast number of persons were not merely spectators of what was done; they were subjects of the miracle. They could speak, therefore, from experience. No attempt was made by the enemies of Christ to deny his miracles. Surprise is heightened in that he performed no miracles in his own behalf. Then, too, his miracles were generally acts of mercy, and not

mere acts of power in nature. If a forger had played a part in working up the Gospel history, he would have had signs and wonders in the heavens to suit wonder-loving people.

It may be a matter of surprise to some that Christ did not so arrange truth as to keep men from forming different denominations. What a power there would have been in one visible church, all of whose members thought and felt alike! Simply by the introduction of a few sentences he might have made all plain. Suppose even that Christ had stated that the apostles were to have no successors, and that baptism and regeneration do not necessarily go together, what a difference that would have made in the development of the Christian religion! The plan evidently was to leave us to the sharp discipline of thought. It might seem to be a help to the men of unbelief if the evidence for Christianity had been made clearer; but as the evidence is sufficient, though not overpowering, it will make them stronger if they fall in with it. It is not by cavilling that we enter the kingdom of truth.

The words of Jesus at different times created surprise. "The people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." There was a commanding power about the teaching of

Christ which impressed men. In the synagogue at Nazareth "all wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." He was in a world-wide sense the manifestation of God's mercy to men. The gracious words pointed to the gracious person. When the officers were sent to arrest Jesus they returned, saying, "Never man spake like this man." Instead of taking him, he took them. Christ had the wonderful ability to *find* men. He went straight into souls. The outward was of little use to him. He lived in the region of mind, and spoke to mind as if no body covered it. "He needed not that any should testify of man; for *he knew* what was *in* man." His searching truth troubled men. His light was too clear for diseased eyes; his purity too pure for depraved hearts. Perdition is eased the farther it is from paradise.

That Christ should wash his disciples' feet was an act that no one would have expected. They were thinking about being great: he would teach them that lowly service performed with love is the greatness that Heaven approves. Shame must have caused their face to blush and burn as they beheld the Master stooping to the duty of a slave. The whole scene is a picture that will never become old.

That the Saviour should institute the Sup-

per in order to commemorate his death is out of the usual course of things. Great men never do that. Such an act would blast their prospects of being remembered. If a memorial day or duty is established, it is done by those who admired the distinguished man, and not by the man himself. The action of the Saviour therefore is peculiar. The inference is, that he bears a relation to the race that is divine and redemptive, and so has the right to make himself the centre of all hearts. As the expiatory death of Christ is the central doctrine of Christianity, it is a wise arrangement to have that truth kept before the mind by the aid of a positive rite.

It is surprising that the rites of the Christian Church are so few—simply baptism and the Lord's Supper: the first, performed only once; the second, as often as love thinks best. In the religions outside of Christianity there is no end to ceremonies. When man works up a scheme of piety, each little matter is specified, so that in course of time there is no end to rites and ceremonies; and the result finally is, that religion is made to consist in merely attending to these. Christianity became corrupt when there was a departure from its original simplicity. Forms and sacraments were multiplied, the number of sacred days and duties

were increased, new virtues and sins were invented, till it was difficult to distinguish what was called Christianity from heathenism. Religion as Christ gave it to us is noted for its spirituality. "Jews and Gentiles had never conceived an idea of religion without any literal *temple*, without an *altar*, without sacrifices, and without any sacrificing priest on earth. Such a religion could never have been *invented*, in those days, by any man, Jew or Gentile." *

The silence of Jesus in certain circumstances is a surprise. Men would have spoken, but he spoke not. What a sublime sight was that when the Saviour stood before the chief priests and elders on the night of his trial, saying not a word in his own defence, though men were testifying falsely against him! "The high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? But Jesus held his peace." That silence inspires one with awe; we bow the head and worship. To be silent when we are praised is easy; but not so easy when assailed by falsehood. Yea, we deem it a virtue to defend our character. Christ, however, made no defence. He was willing to stand forth blackened by men who were deemed the

* Archbishop Whately, "Corruptions of Christianity," p. 131.

purest. To be defamed by those who are known to be corrupt, affects us less than to be defamed by men who are viewed as holy. It was something, then, for Jesus to be silent in the midst of the priests of God and the judicial officers of the state. Then, too, what heightens the matter is the fact that Christ had no defender. Peter was there, but he said nothing. He simply told the servants that he was not one of Christ's disciples. Many a friend fails us when we need him the most. Jesus is taken before Pilate. The governor is surrounded by those who are clamorous against this person who is deceiving the people. He says, "Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? But Jesus answered him to never a word." In no court-room had such a sight been seen. The silence of Innocence meets us. The flower is crushed, but its perfume fills all the air. I am not surprised that "the governor marvelled greatly." The eloquence of Silence had spoken to him. His sense of justice is awakened. He begins to take sides with the accused. He asks, "What evil hath he done?" The unreasoning mob cry out, "Let him be crucified." Thus the scene goes forward. The Creator is tried by the creature, and the Holy is condemned by the sinful, yet he utters not a word. Here we

behold the dignity of Silence, and the silence of Dignity.

It is surprising that a robber should be saved at the last hour. The fact shows the greatness of God's mercy. The moralist is not pleased that favor should be extended to a criminal, while he himself is cast out. The significant point, however, is the one, that the criminal was *penitent*, while the moralist is not. This reveals the radical difference between the two characters. However fair outwardly a person may be, yet if he will not repent, he is in a state of rebellion. Possibly the robber had grown up in circumstances that were unfavorable, but that now finding the right way he cries for mercy. If any one does truly repent at death it would seem to be the man who has had few Christian advantages. He sees the truth almost for the first time, and so believes it. The man who has rejected the Gospel all the way up to the moment of death will be so hardened that he will likely die as he has lived. In the whole Bible there is no instance of a man's repenting at the last hour save that of the malefactor who hung beside our Lord, and this is only mentioned by one Evangelist. This shows that it is just possible for one to find salvation at that time.

There are phases of Christ's action with

reference to his mother that are peculiar. It is not mentioned that he ever addressed Mary as mother; his usual style is *woman*. The relation of the Virgin to her Divine Son was one of honor, but it must not be pressed too far. The incarnation was infinitely greater than motherhood. The fact that Mary was saved like other human beings enables us to see the real standing of the two parties. There is no intimation that Christ communicated with his mother after his resurrection. It is stated that she was in the upper room with the apostles; but she drops out of history after that time. Now, in a human point of view, it would be our impression that the risen Lord would take special notice of Mary and would be with her as often as possible. The peculiar conduct of the Saviour, therefore, forces us into the spiritual realm. He once stated that "whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." Human relations are subordinate: divine relations are superior. Christ is the mediator between *God* and *men*, and his relation to an earthly mother must not interfere with such a high office. It may have been part of his training that he should gradually break from this human tie. That Mary sinks out of sight seems like the working of a divine plan. That

Christ in general says so little about his mother, but says a great deal about salvation, shows where the chief thoughts lie. "In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female." There is a point when the Saviour must withdraw from the motherly embrace. He is "God over all and blessed forever." He is to be trusted, obeyed, and worshipped. When the Redeemer entered upon his glorified state, his human nature was so completely elevated that it passed out of history. Reverence forbids that we think of him in eternity as we think of him in time.

That Christ left behind him no writings is remarkable. It would seem to heighten everything if he had written what pertained to his life and mission. He preferred, however, to leave the business to men; yet men guided by the Spirit of God. The kingdoms of nature and redemption are carried forward through the medium of second causes. It is no doubt better for us that the Saviour penned no part of the Gospel history. Perhaps the tendency would have been to worship the Divine writing, rather than the Divine Redeemer.

Christ himself is the great surprise.

CHAPTER III.

SOLITUDE OF THE SAVIOUR.

THE Creator sets foot on the earth that he made, and yet the people whom he equally made do not recognize him. He is the Homeless Wanderer of Palestine, the Lonely Vanquisher of death, and the Opener of the gates of life. We think of the quietness that was ever about him, of the meekness that never went away, of a certain unexplained character that brought men to a stand, and of a solitude which singles him out as the Royal Stranger who tarried with us for a night. A kind of anxious suspense ought to characterize the soul as it contemplates the mysterious loneliness of the Son of God. We ought to pause as we think. Even if Christ were no more than the greatest of men, the solitude of his existence should invite our serious attention. But he is the God-man on a mission of mercy, and therefore the whole is heightened and deepened.

The solitude of Jesus is evinced by the

uniqueness of his being. He was human, and yet divine. There was a duality of nature, yet singleness of person. Here then is the wonder. No other being of this kind existed in the universe: there is only *one* God-man. In the constitution of the Deity there are three eternal persons, and thus no solitude. Companionship in the Godhead is complete apart from any creation. But the eternal Son assumes the garb of mortals. Only one of the divine persons becomes a man. The eternal Spirit becomes not human. He quickens and comforts the fallen, yet all is invisible. The eternal Father clothes not himself in flesh. He is boundless in compassion towards the guilty, yet no form makes it apparent. "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him." There is thus a uniqueness about the divine-human Saviour, and by that he stands alone.

I do not say that any change took place in the nature of Deity by the incarnation. The perfection of the Godhead forbids this. The pre-existent Logos was not emptied of essential power and essential glory by his assumption of human nature. Only this I say, that one of the divine trinity became a man, and in this duplex state he has a solitude of being paralleled not by any created persons, for there are

none like him; and paralleled not by the two uncreated persons, for they have not become incarnate, but he has. And be it understood also, that we are not now speaking of what may be called an *ideal* God-man—one who might be supposed to find a place in a universe where all are holy—neither are we speaking of a *glorified* God-man throned at the right hand of the Father, and listening to the high praises of the countless multitudes of heaven; but he who is before us is the *redemptive* God-man, the veritable Being who lived in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago.

I can well imagine that the solitude of Jesus deepened around him as he, in his *human nature*, grew up into the full realization of his divinity. At first, he could not have appeared to himself as so far separated from the race as actually he was. But when the thought reached him that he was in very deed divine-human, then he could feel that he was alone as he never had felt before. As if a great part of a continent moved off into the open sea and settled there, so Jesus was insulated when he saw that deity and humanity were his. That must have been a wonderful moment in the life of Christ when he perceived that he had left the splendors of eternity in order to tabernacle in a human form. Then it was

that an unusual loneliness begirt his spirit, as if an ancient star looked through the gloom of night with none beside it, or as if all the lamps of heaven went out but one, and that burned on and on with a light that was strange and awe-inspiring.

Christ lived in a secluded region, out of the way of the world's movement. He had come into the race from above, bringing with him treasures that are not found here. He was, in the strict sense of the word, a *new man*; just as much so as if a most brilliant star were to appear in the heavens for the first time, or an angel were to arise out of the ocean, and then walk upon its surging billows as easy as along the golden streets of the city of God. Talk about Christ being a lofty sage, a religious genius, is to talk without meaning. If he were not very much more than this, he was very much less. He seems like some royal bark of God sailing cross the sea of life, while all around are dismasted ships driven by storms. We think of him as a silvery wave of the eternal ocean, beating in solitude by day and by night, hastening away to the infinite regions of life. Wherever he casts his eye there is death, while he alone is the Living One.

The solitude of Jesus is clearly seen from

the uniqueness of his mission and from *the circumstances which rose up to oppose it*. If the constitution of his person was such as to single him out by himself amidst the immensity of existence, it might be expected that the work he had before him would also be peculiar. The fact that we have an Incarnate Being is a prophecy of some new and wonderful mission. Yea, the fact that a Supernatural Person has come to dwell in a strange land is proof that the mission already is begun. To make atonement for a world of fallen beings is the one great work. This is unheard of. No intelligence of Heaven's high monarchy ever conceived the thought. Christ has begun a task which he alone must finish; and whatever the pain, he must conquer and he must suffer as the case may be.

There was not even one soul, as far as we know, that seemed to comprehend the true idea of his mission. His work was so distinctly original and divine, that there was a dullness of the human intellect and a deadness of the human heart with reference to it. The clearest evidence was darkness to the darkened mind. The Saviour seemed like a teacher without pupils, a king without subjects, the guide to heaven with no one to go there. The first step which Jesus took among the Jewish

scholars in the temple made not the wisest of them to see a divine youth standing in their presence. Even his mother, who knew of his supernatural birth and sinless years, could not fathom his strange course as he lingered behind the returning company with the doctors at Jerusalem.

Sympathy which all men claim, and the good the most, he found not. The inhabitants where he dwelt cared not for him. Even his twelve apostles had about them an element of Judaic obtuseness. Their sympathy ran low and slow. However near he might want his disciples to come to him, a something held them back. The one fact of redemption, which kept pace with his life and culminated in his death, they could not be made to understand. Consequently no sympathy smoothed his way or softened the grief of his spirit. If I could find no more than this that he was "a man of sorrows," sufficient would be the evidence that in solitude he passed the days of his incarnate life. The deepest sorrow hides itself; and though but seldom the tear may fall, yet in the shaded loneliness of being, the drops of anguish keep falling which cause many a sigh. Whether on turbulent week-day the Saviour preached or prayed, or during the holy quiet of Sabbath hours he spoke and worshipped, all

alike in this, that "he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows" wherever he went or whatever he did.

Mark the opposition that meets him. "He came unto his own and his own received him not." The founder of a new kingdom, he was not loved. The revealer of God, he was not believed. The rebuker of sin, he was hated. Whether in silence or speech, he was condemned. Whether with publican or priest, with rich or poor, he was derided. True, he had followers, for the common people heard him gladly, and his fame spread beyond the limits of Canaan; yet with all this he was persecuted, and wherever there is persecution there is solitude. A priceless diamond from the throne of God is brought to our world, yet its beauty men do not see and its value men do not know. They pass it aside as if it were nothing, trample it under foot as if it were a worthless thing. If they take it up and look at it, they say its seeming clearness and unusual size are certain marks of inferiority; so they throw it away, exclaiming, Whoever may be deceived, we will not. They know not that this jewel has sparkled in the crown of God through all eternity. True is the language of the prophet: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no

beauty that we should desire him." Like some noble Alpine flower shooting forth in the midst of wintry desolation, he bloomed and smiled on Canaan's soil. Like some lonely cedar on the brow of Lebanon, he stood the prey of adverse winds.

"I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." That is a notable passage, crowded with a startling experience. There is a realization of the mighty task which no mere creature could carry out, or even undertake. The sense of this falls like a mountain weight on the soul of Jesus. He has come to work out salvation for untold millions. The thought is infinite. Solitude deepens. The future is open to his eye, and he beholds what he has to do and to suffer. Our being would be overwhelmed, if we knew what should happen to us in the present life. There are men who would sink into insanity, men who would die, if the future were revealed to them.

Notice what may be called *redemptive responsibility*. The obligations which Christ had assumed were extraordinary. They were designed to meet a crisis in the government of God. The destiny of millions hung on the faithfulness of the Son of man. If he failed, they failed; if he stood, they stood. The sense

of responsibility with a good man is sometimes overwhelming. The whole mind is taxed to the utmost—the intellect, conscience, heart, and will. Help is needed from every quarter—the support of men, the assistance of angels, the strength of God. Faith must be unwavering, hope must be cloudless, love must be glowing. If such be the demand with the natural obligation of men, how is the whole heightened with the supernatural obligation of Christ! We do not go too far when we say that the burden which pressed upon his spirit was so great that it produced pain. Let us not imagine that it was with ease and utmost passivity of soul that the Saviour wrought out salvation. “He trode the wine-press *alone*, and of the people there was none with him.” Christ was crucified before he hung on the tree; he died while he lived.

Behold the *intensity* of his pain. Pain has degrees. The highest stretch of it is fearful. He offered himself each day to God; each hour as it passed bore up to heaven the sacrifice of Messiah’s spirit. Whatever the time, the place, the act, he was always the Lamb slain. If you would see a man alone, see him in suffering. If you would see the Redeemer alone, see him in the travail of his soul. Go to the garden on the night of his betrayal: the scene

is real, it is solemn, it is solitary. The Divine Man is prostrate upon the earth. "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." What does this mean? What prayer offered he at that hour? "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Verily no easy task is it to redeem a world. That cup of suffering seemed to appall the mightiest Being that the earth had ever seen. But watch how the solitude becomes still more solitary. The disciples of Jesus comprehend not the agony that is shaking his soul. They are asleep! Strange sight! They speak no word of comfort; they quote no promise of God. Is he then alone? Yes, alone. The Mediator of man wrestles with God. His single prayer goes up to heaven. But notice—a quick-winged angel hastens down from the throne of God to strengthen him. At the darkest moment a single ray of light is seen. When no human comforter is nigh, a seraph bends over the Saviour. The heavenly messenger having fulfilled his mission departs. The storm subdued a little, yet beats heavily. Judas draws near. Christ now "is led as a lamb to the slaughter." At the trying hour all his disciples flee. Peter

denies his Lord. The Friend of man has no friend. In the darkness of night he is tried: in the morning he is condemned. A stranger carries his cross, yet not out of love, but by compulsion, like many an unwilling disciple. There is not one to whom he can open his heart. A company of women lament his fate as they follow behind, but they understand not the import of his mission. He calls upon them to weep for their children and for themselves.

As the solitary sufferer he is now nailed to the tree. He hangs between heaven and earth, symbol of his mediation between God and the guilty. The passers-by revile him. What friends he has are lost in the crowd like many a disciple in the world. Each face about the cross is like the face of a foe. A company of malignant angels assault his spirit. They would make him fall from his innocency if possible. As the time is short, they try their utmost. They would blast the hopes of the world and of Jesus if they can. In the absence of any friend, nature sympathizes. The earth sighs, and there is an eclipse at noon. The very graves are opened, as if the speechless inhabitants of the sepulchre could no longer be silent, and as if eternity must unbar its gates by reason of anxious spirits

from the realms of God. The hours move on with heavy march like the tread of mourners to the grave of friends. The laugh of the rude soldier is heard beneath the cross, and the joke of hardened men falls upon the ear. The priest and scribe quote Holy Writ to justify the death of him who claimed to be the Son of God. It must be two or three o'clock in the afternoon, and yet it is dark. Solitude connects itself more naturally with darkness than with light. Jesus, therefore, seems more alone.

A mysterious woe now befalls his spirit such as no day before has ever seen, nor any night. *He is forsaken of God.* More dreary this than to be left by nearest friends; more to be feared than frown of man or anger of demon. No angel from the skies now comes to strengthen and to comfort in the trying hour. Heaven is shut. The earth has no look of love, no word of hope, no hand of help. The Mighty Sufferer is left to himself. Out of the deep darkness he cries, as some lone man on a wreck at night with fierce billows rolling over him: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This surely is solitude. None like it before, none like it since, none in the coming years of time. The cup which the Saviour came to drink is taken down to its very dregs. The

mediatorial suffering is ended. The spirit is committed to God. Jesus dies. The Innocent One has offered up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God. He wrestled, prayed, sorrowed, suffered, died, for sinful man in profound solitude.

CHAPTER IV.

PERFECTION OF THE SAVIOUR.

“It sometimes happens,” remarks Dr. Johnson, “that too close an attention to minute exactness, or a too rigorous habit of examining everything by the standard of *perfection*, vitiates the temper, rather than improves the understanding, and teaches the mind to discern faults with unhappy penetration.”* This thought is often true in the working of our fallen nature, but it does not show itself in the experience of Christ.

It is not possible for any human being to form the ideal of a perfect man. If the attempt were made, the ideal would be different at different times. As the man himself changed, his ideal would change; and so he never could be sure that he had reached the very ideal that was wanted. Let thousands of men try to form the ideal of a perfect man, and they would all differ in certain particulars from each other. They would succeed the

* “The Rambler,” No. 74.

best in giving a *general description* of a perfect man. When they came to *particulars* they would fail. The particulars are so many that belong to a complete character, and there is such an infinite variety among the particulars, and such wisdom demanded to arrange them properly, that it is certain there would be a failure. So long as I made the attempt simply to give an outline of a perfect man, I might do something. If I were to say, for instance, that the perfect man never loses his temper in the most trying circumstances, that he is patient amid the most grievous afflictions, that he is contented whatever his condition, that he is a lover of the whole race of man, that his trust in God has no element of doubt, and that his love is as large as his soul and as complete as the divine law—in such a case you would have a general outline of a perfect man, and as far as it went it might be acceptable; but all this is different from the perfect man as seen in the minuteness and manifoldness of his character.

I can see as I look over the writings of some of the ancients that they had at times an exalted ideal of life. The Stoics tell us that “the sage is alone truly free”; “the sage is the only rich man”; “the sage is the only king.” We are informed also that “the sages

are divine, for they have God in themselves," and that "they are the only priests, for they have a correct knowledge with respect to offerings, statues of the gods, purifications and other services which are due to the gods."* Here the idea is mixed with idolatry, showing that those vigorous minds of antiquity were not able to form the conception of a perfect man. Aristotle speaks thus: "A man ought not to entertain human thoughts, as some would advise, because he is human, nor mortal thoughts, because he is mortal; but as far as it is possible he should make himself immortal, and do everything with a view to living in accordance with the best principle in him; although it be small in size, yet in power and value it is far more excellent than all."† A fine thought can be seen here. The man is taken away from the human and the temporal, and is made to face the divine and the everlasting; and as he looks at these and catches a glimpse of the true ideal, he is told to follow that in preference to everything else.

A wrong view of *God* and a wrong view of *sin* will keep any man from understanding the nature of moral perfection; and all systems outside of Biblical teaching fail at these

* Neander, in "Biblioth. Sacra," vol. x., p. 496.

† "Nicom. Ethics," p. 280. Bohn's ed.

points. Besides this, the mind is turned mainly to contemplation. The ideal is centred in the reason. He who could shut himself out from the world, not heeding its cares nor its pleasures, holding communion with verities that never change—he was the complete man. Hence the Platonic idea was, that there could be no perfect polity unless the *philosopher* was king. The mystics of all ages have been pleased with this silent life.

But even if we could form the ideal of a perfect man, it would be nothing but an *abstraction*. The great benefit we have in Christianity is the possession of an *ideal person*, and not the mere ideal without the person. The ideal is realized. The perfect man stands out before us, and we see how he acts, how he feels, and what his thoughts are. Besides, we do not merely see this perfect man for a single day or a single week, as if he had come to us directly from heaven, and then, after a day or a week, had gone back to heaven again; but he is born here, grows up here, and passes through the different stages of life just as we do ourselves. We see him as a child, as a youth, and as a man, and in each he is complete. He does not grow from evil into goodness, but he is good from the start. For a season he flourishes in retirement; a sweet and

heavenly flower; a joy that has winged its way from the climes of God; a purity like the eternal waters of life that have sparkled among the hills and valleys of paradise. For years he seems not to be known. Like a star he shines amid the darkness of time; no eye beholding his beauty; no soul pure enough to crave his presence; not one so pressed down with a sense of need as to say this star shall guide me to my home in the kingdom of blessedness.

When the time comes the Saviour appears as a public character. He takes no easy path; a path that might be deemed suitable to one so great. He seems to go through all the planes of our human life; forcing himself, as it were, into our moulds; destitute as the children of want are found to be in a world like this. He toils, but his toil is neither for honor nor wealth; he labors unto weariness for souls that are lost. To those who feel that they are in bondage to sin, he says that he has come to open the prison doors and to let the oppressed go free. He attempts no sensation, throws out no bait to catch men, utters truth, sends forth an influence. His words enter the soul; touch the deepest part of the soul; bring to a stand natures that are crooked. As he deals only with truth, the malicious are maddened by his touch. They strike back; they would

trample him down; they say he is the enemy of the people.

Did Christ ever show the feeling of *contempt*? Some would answer, Yes; others, No. When he spoke of Herod as a "fox," was that the language of contempt? "Christ," says Dr. Farrar, "deservedly bestowed on Herod Antipas the sole word of pure unmitigated contempt which is ever recorded to have passed his lips."* I doubt whether the Saviour spoke of the crafty monarch in the way of contempt. He saw the cunning spirit of the man, and his words run in that line. Although Christ had no feeling of contempt for any human being, we are not to draw the inference that he viewed all alike, softening and flattening all moral distinctions by reason of a tasteless compassion. There was a most exact discrimination in his view of men; worth and worthlessness never changed with him. His tenderness never sunk into weakness, and although he was forgiving, he did not look upon sin as a trifle: he condemned just as strongly as he approved.

The Saviour did not cut out an easy way for himself. He passed through a severe temptation at the beginning of his public life; teaching us a lesson, that if we would be suc-

* "Life of Christ," chap. xlii.

cessful in some new moral undertaking, we must school the soul in a sharp and rigid manner. He enters into our experience as far as that is possible, and comes out clean without any stain. We might have known by express revelation that a perfect man lived in the eternal state, with its finely arranged circumstances, but that would not be so satisfactory to us as to have the same man live upon the earth with its unfavorable surroundings. He who is to stand at the head of a new race of godlike men must show by his trial and discipline that he is a kingly spirit, the highest and best that has yet appeared in all the systems of creaturely life.

Pain as well as temptation must put to the test the perfect man. The pain becomes a new temptation. Yea, it becomes an exceedingly severe one, because the pain is intense. He, however, passes through it, not giving way at any point. It would seem as if he were made doubly perfect through suffering. The angels and our first parents fell from their purity when all was *pleasant*, but this new Man retains his integrity in the midst of *pain*. He thus has greater wealth and greater strength of character than they possessed. Yea, his victory over pain resulted in greater wealth and strength of character.

It was not till Christ came and showed to the world what a sinless man was that they caught the idea. All was theory and speculation previous to the advent of the Son of God. "Cicero declares that he at least had never found a perfectly wise man: on the contrary, he says the philosophers are all at variance as to 'what kind of a man such a one would be, *if ever he might be expected to exist.*' Cicero had a sufficient knowledge both of ethics and history to qualify him for passing such a sentence, and we may well regard his opinion as expressing the consciousness of the educated portion of the ancient world. In fact, there did not exist in the sphere of heathenism an individual with whom the idea of moral faultlessness could be associated." *

Since the Perfect One appeared, millions of men in every age, with various degrees of culture, have fastened their eye on him and have rested there, glad to find the Reality that souls had been dreaming about. The first Christians who saw him, or who heard about him, were satisfied that in him was found no evil thing. And what is remarkable, the Four Evangelists make no attempt to set off the Man of men. In fact, we are surprised at their unemotional way of doing things. We

* Ullman, "Sinlessness of Jesus," p. 97.

wonder why they were not excited once in a while, and under the excitement write beautiful passages about the Great Master. It is well that it was so, because Christ simply looks out upon us in all his native loveliness. High coloring, rich dress, fine jewelry, could not improve perfection. In the Epistles, as well as in the Gospels, the same quiet style is adopted with reference to Jesus. We are simply told that "he was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"; "a lamb without blemish and without spot."

The character of Christ had depth, compass, power. He took up an action and finished it; not stopping half way, not grieving that he had begun. He lost no energy by questioning or indecision. His doings were free and rounded out. Yet his righteous force did not flash like the lightning. Quietly the good deed was done. There was all the secrecy of high life about his works. His acts were not seasoned with earthliness in order to attract souls. They echoed on ears that were open, and came to hearts as the dew comes to flowers. There is too much of human goodness that is ticketed, and marked as a merchant marks his goods. There was a mystic and heavenly kind of unselfishness about the life of Christ. He gave what he had with glad-

ness; pleased when any received what he offered. He was not here on his own account. He was the one person who lived for others. Nothing but benevolence marked his way. He sacrificed himself each moment.

The more we see of the *best men*, the more we see of their *infirmities*, but the more we see of *Jesus*, the more we see of his *goodness*. No man will bear an examination. The most exalted human spirits appear the best in the distance. Nearness of approach, the searching glance, reveal roughnesses even as oil paintings do when you stand beside them. The full-sailed ship is more attractive to a spectator than to one who walks the deck, and the lofty mountain is more grand when seen miles away than when one is standing at its base. Many a name has appeared well on the printed page to strangers, while to those who were better acquainted it was not so fair. A face with a wart here and there may look pleasant and beautiful in a picture, but it is because the wart scarcely appears in the photograph. A general outline of men is all that we can bear; multiplicity of particulars show imperfection. With Christ all was different. Those who knew him the best found him the best. He might show the entire working of his soul and no flaw would be detected. We mingle

with each other and seem to each other to be friends, and yet we have thoughts about each other that we would not venture to reveal. One of the most fearful revelations in the universe would be the revelation of a human soul. We may tremble when we think that God knows us. The Peerless One shines alone. Eternal glories beam forth from him as we pavilion ourselves beneath the splendors of his love.

I believe that even wicked men find a degree of relief at times just to think of Christ. If they can picture out his character with any kind of fulness and finish, they are pleased. He is to them an ideal, the most complete they have ever known, and so their finest pieces of writing have been about him. It is remarkable that sceptical men have struck off passages relating to Jesus that are of the highest excellence. They were compelled to do homage to One whom they could not obey; their imagination being sounder than their heart; their taste having the mastery over them at the very time their unbelief was ugly and repellent. Note the two following citations as specimens of this kind of writing:

“Jesus unites in himself the sublimest precepts and divinest practices, thus more than realizing the dream of prophets and sages;

risers free from all prejudice of his age, nation, or sect; gives free range to the Spirit of God in his breast; sets aside the law, sacred and time-honored as it was, its forms, its sacrifices, its temple, and its priests; puts away the doctors of the law, subtle, learned, irrefragable, and pours out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God. The philosophers, the poets, the prophets, the Rabbis,—he rises above them all.”* “It is difficult to do justice to our intense love, reverence, and admiration for the character and teachings of Jesus. We regard him, not as the perfection of the intellectual or philosophic mind, but as the perfection of the spiritual character; as surpassing all men at all times in the closeness and depth of his communion with the Father. In reading his sayings, we feel that we are holding converse with the wisest, purest, noblest Being that ever clothed thought in the poor language of humanity.”†

Perhaps, if we knew the whole truth, we might find that some of the great painters have been led on by their genius, rather than by true piety, in their efforts to present to us a likeness of the Saviour. As the highest form of art does not consist in imitation, but in

* Parker, “Discourse Pertaining to Religion,” p. 275.

† Greg, “Creed of Christendom,” pp. 227, 228.

working out with reference to an ideal, so the finest painters have aimed to set forth on canvas the ideal man. There is no doubt that in all this there was a degree of pleasure; a kind of natural rejoicing in Christ Jesus; a species of worship paid to the Son of man in the outer court. It may be that such men thought themselves religious when they were not, just because they could represent the Sinless One in a way of lowliness and majesty; and being enraptured with the work which they had done, should imagine that they were equally enraptured with Christ himself.

Jesus has gone, and yet he is still here. There was an aroma to his being which told of paradise, and that aroma lingered among men after he went away. On the suffering days of life we can detect it. When earth is poor and heaven is rich to us we can perceive it. The radiance of his life skirts our darkness, and the peacefulness of his soul comes to us as angels come during the morning watch of heaven. We seem to hear the sound of his footsteps of love, and echoes of joy seem to greet us as we thread our way to the unseen land. Neither child nor man is the same, just because he has lived here. There is a movement in the air and in the sea, a voice heralding the dawn and a glory figured in the clouds,

because he tabernacled for years among the sons of men. The birds seem to sing more cheerfully, the insects play more happily, and the flowers send forth a sweeter perfume, because the Lord of the creation lived upon the earth. The Divine Goodness walks with us when we know it not. Through the night the Hidden One leads us. In death the Life takes us home. In the kingdom of glory we shall dwell with him forever.

Thou exalted Being! we cannot name thy perfections. Thy majesty is beyond our thought, and thy splendor is more glorious than our imagination can conceive. We tire in our efforts to describe thee. Thou art the source of life, the fountain of love, the home of rest. Thou art the fair country that has never been explored, the ocean of blessedness that has never been fathomed. When we shall be like thee and see thee as thou art, we shall be well. The hours of our life shall then be like the day of God, with no evening to darken it. In eternal youth we shall abide, and the older we become the younger we shall be.

CHAPTER V.

BEAUTY OF THE SAVIOUR'S CHARACTER.

As to whether Christ's physical nature was beautiful or not we cannot tell. It is of no profit to discuss that question. As to the pictures which pretend to represent the God-man, they seem to us entirely improper from a religious point of view. The sacredness of the person should forbid all attempts of that kind. Religious art is no help to an artless life. Better leave the Saviour where the Bible leaves him. Though we see him not we love him; and perhaps the love is more spiritual just because it is grounded on faith. Certainly an imaginary likeness of the Son of God will not tend to make our love purer. In heaven he will be seen as he is. Let us wait for the heavenly vision.

Beauty has laws, and these laws, as far as we have discovered them, enable us to understand the marked features of it, but they do not enable us to give a definition of it. No satisfactory definition has been found which

contains within itself the complete idea of beauty. We are simply travelling towards such a point, and may by and by reach it. A class of subordinate thoughts are sure: 1. Beauty is in the object. 2. Reason gives us the idea of beauty, and so all men have it. 3. Wherever we find the beautiful we find a certain excellency. 4. Beauty attracts us. 5. The feeling that is awakened by the beautiful is pleasant and unselfish. 6. The tendency is to rest in beauty.

Christ is not merely one of the manifestations of beauty, but he is the expression of the collective beauty of the creation. The beauties of nature, of truth, and of goodness are summed up in him, and find in him their ideal perfection. Beauty is the radiance of God, and although it shows itself in countless forms, it always bears the stamp of divinity. "The true prize of life," remarks Plato, "is the sight of the eternal beauty. Compared with such a sight as this, what would be the poor images of earth which so often trouble and perplex us? What, I ask you, would be the destiny of that mortal to whom it should be given to contemplate the unmingled beauty in all its purity and simplicity, no longer invested with perishable human accompaniments, but face to face to see and know the beauty unchangeable and divine? Think you he would have

ground for complaint who, fixing his eyes on such an object, should give himself to celestial communion with it? And is it not solely in the contemplation of the eternal beauty with that organ by which alone it can be seized, that he shall be enabled to produce, not images of virtue, because it is not to images he is attaching himself, but virtues real and genuine, because it is truth alone that he loves." * Such transcendent beauty as the above is realized in Christ.

I. BEAUTY OF THE SAVIOUR'S CHARACTER FROM ITS FORM.

Beauty that is abstracted from all matter and mind, and is viewed merely by itself, is too formless to move the soul. An imagined goodness in the same way that is not connected with an intelligent being is incapable of starting emotion. A winding river and a spire of a certain shape, plants and trees of a certain form, are beautiful. A gem apart from its quality may have a high degree of beauty because of its form. Beautiful characteristics of a soul are superior to beautiful characteristics of a thing.

Christ was always greater than his actions

* Quoted in W. A. Butler's "Lectures on Ancient Phil," vol. ii., p. 276.

proclaimed him to be. The total excellence of his mind was never wholly expressed. The fountain was larger than the streams that flowed from it. Hence his inward beauty was more extended than the beauty that was seen in his life. There was a delicacy about his nature and mental states, a delicacy about his desires and thoughts, that never could find expression in word or deed. That spiritual delicacy was spiritual beauty; and although no mortal eye could see it, the divine eye beheld it with delight.

There was a sublimity about certain movements of the Prince of Life that must arrest the attention of every serious person. His commanding the storm to be still, the sigh that ascended from his heart as he looked up to heaven, the glory that covered him on the mount as he conversed with the two redeemed men, his shedding tears over the doomed city of Jerusalem, are all manifestations of sublimity. The wonderful idea of an incarnate God is sublime; and when that incarnate God ascends to the courts of life to reign over the universe, there is grandeur, sublimity, and beauty all in one. There is nothing contracted about the person and mission of our Lord. Everything is upon an extended scale. The glory is infinite.

II. BEAUTY OF THE SAVIOUR'S CHARACTER FROM ITS SIMPLICITY.

Simplicity is a mark of greatness as well as a mark of beauty. The higher the person the more conspicuous is the simplicity, and the more charming it appears. Extraneous things are cut away from that which is simple, and we behold thought and speech, act and instrument, in their undivided excellence. A showy nature wants that which will catch the eye and astonish the spectator, rather than that which will pass current with God. The simplicity of Christ characterized his entire life, and was not a virtue which appeared on special occasions. That it was uniform tended to conceal it. Souls of an inferior cast could not behold it. Only the simple-minded could detect it. From its nature it worked in lowliness, as if its sphere were the spiritual, rather than the material. The life of Jesus did not force itself upon human attention. It was there and spoke for itself, but its language was heavenly, and consequently foreign to the mass of the people. He was "as a root out of a dry ground." The character of the Saviour was definite; as much so as a garden of flowers and the starry heavens; but it could only be fully prized by saints and angels. His

life unfolded itself, not according to the natural which belongs to us, but according to the *truly natural*. He flourished as the first of all the plants in paradise, yet growing in a desert land with sullen skies.

The simplicity of the Saviour had singleness. It seemed the essence as well as the aroma of love; the ointment of spikenard that was pure and that brought a high price. He struck but one thought, and that carried him through from beginning to end. The absolute sincerity of a great spirit was simply seen at work, heeding nothing but the single and supreme business of his life. In the speech of Jesus there is a great deal of artless word-painting. This may arise from the vividness of his style, and from the striking metaphors which he uses. "Jesus Christ speaks of the most sublime subjects with such simplicity, that he seems not to have thought on them; and yet with such accuracy, that what he thought is distinctly brought out. This union of artlessness with perspicuity is admirable."*

III. BEAUTY OF THE SAVIOUR'S CHARACTER FROM ITS HARMONY.

An engine that works with ease seems like a noble creature, and we cannot help admiring

* Pascal's "Thoughts," chap. x. "On Jesus Christ."

it. Discords in music jar upon the mind. If we enter a school-room where all is confusion we are annoyed, but if after a time there is order we are pleased. The ripple of waves on a calm lake or sea and their echo as they roll up on the shore, impress one with a sense of beauty, and we stand and gaze at the sight with pleasure. Christ's life is to be looked at as a system. Foreign and unforeseen elements were not dovetailed into it as circumstances might seem to demand, neither were any parts broken off and cast aside as not suitable to special occasions. The God-man was erecting a glorious cathedral, and the wonderful fabric grew as a thing of life,—stone and style and size and ornamentation being just as the architect intended. The life of Christ was not like that of any creature whatsoever, from the fact that he planned it before he came here. He was singular in that he had two existences; first the divine, then the human with the divine.

Fixing the eye on the soul of Jesus, it can be seen to work in finest harmony. There was no wrong impulse, bias, or tendency; the entire soul was proportioned; the character was always balanced. Christ never stopped short of the mark, and never went too far. Purity leaped into pure act, and habits that

expressed his nature held him fast. Men are clamorous for their rights, but not eager to do right. The Saviour did right, and wasted no time in demanding his rights. His passive and positive nature showed no antagonism. Decision did not become stubbornness, nor courage coarseness, nor gentleness tameness. To the extent that he was tender he was severe, but his severity was simply the majesty of righteousness. Not the least vestige of sentimentalism appeared in his character. His patience in the midst of opposition was astonishing. "It frequently happens," says Robert Hall, "that objects of the most perfect symmetry strike our minds less than those which are deformed. The *first* impression made on our minds by the contemplation of the Saviour's excellencies is not always that of astonishment. It is that sort of moral excellence which requires to be diligently studied and patiently examined: it will never strike the eye of a careless and indifferent spectator." *

IV. BEAUTY OF THE SAVIOUR'S CHARACTER FROM ITS MANIFOLDNESS ENDING IN UNITY.

The variety that is in Christ is not the variety of select souls, but it is the variety

* "Works," vol. iv., p. 165. New York ed.

which marks the nature and works of a divine-human person. There is quality and compass which signalize his multiplicity, and which place him in a sphere by himself; so that he cannot be compared with the most exalted of mankind. If there were about him the usual variety of great minds, it would not be difficult to find unity. But when we know that the God-man has so many points that are far-reaching and altogether peculiar, so many points also that cross and recross each other, having power and fineness that we cannot fully grasp, it is a great matter to bring all into oneness. If we were to see the different parts of a watch laid out on a table, and then see them put in their place by a workman, the watch set in motion and the exact time of day made known, we should exclaim, How complete and how beautiful! If the British Museum, with its thousands upon thousands of varied articles, could all be classified and brought to a centre of unity, it would in that case be an illustration of the oneness there is in Christ. There are paintings of finished workmanship which appear to the unpractised eye as a kind of splendid chaos, because the principle of unity is not seen. Point out the principle of unity, and every part is luminous with skill and beauty, and one cannot find lan-

guage sufficient to express the perfection of the work. That which brings all into unity in the life of the Saviour is redemption. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." This passage not only informs us that the atonement is the culmination of Christ's mission upon earth, and the end to which it evermore pointed, but it tells us also that it is the means by which *we are united to God*. The whole matter is thus complete, and we can go no further. "Man's nature, need, and destiny are, so to speak, wrapped up in Christ. The secrets of our inmost being, the enigmas of our destiny, are revealed to us in Christ, and in him alone. Life is a maze; and we do not find the clue to guide us safely through until we find Christ. Life is an enigma, and the word that solves the enigma is Christ, the Word of God." *

V. BEAUTY OF THE SAVIOUR'S CHARACTER FROM THE REPOSE THAT CROWNED IT.

Unless our views of Jesus are extended, we may lose sight of the repose which settled down upon his finished nature. It is true that he had an unusual sadness, but did that banish rest from his soul? Could he not have two

* Smith, "Christian Theology," p. 379.

opposite feelings at the same time, just like the martyrs who praised God in the midst of the flames? The very sadness which hung around him seemed to humanize his divine character, even as a blue sky adds to the beauty of a summer's day. He did not feel disappointed or discontented. He was certainly satisfied with himself in the course he pursued, though pain was in it; and did not that holy self-satisfaction contain an element of repose? We make a great mistake if we think that there was nothing but one sensation of suffering in the soul of Christ. He could not annihilate the rich approval of his own nature which arose in view of his redemptive righteousness, even though that redemptive righteousness included agonies and death. The fact that in his communion with the eternal Father he could say, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," shows that he was in a state of repose at that time. The trust that had no doubt, the decision that had no wavering, and the perseverance that faltered not in the trying hour, ended in rest. There was a sublimity about his composure from the fact that it spread over his soul while in the midst of great suffering, reminding one of the overstretching vastness of the creation in a state

of quiet, while away below is the loud beating of the storm.

The beauty that had form, simplicity, harmony, and manifoldness that came round into unity, must end in the state of repose. As the Saviour's beauty was that of the seven-colored light it was serene and akin to the rest of God. His beauty had power, and the power ended in peace. Jesus was a divine flower that moved from place to place, attracting souls by its beauty, and filling the air with its fragrance.

CHAPTER VI.

SUGGESTIVE POWER OF THE SAVIOUR'S PERSONALITY.

THE personality of Christ affects minds in a way that is characteristic of the minds affected. He does not awaken in every soul the same kind of emotions in the same circumstances. One person may be touched with admiration as he views the Saviour at a particular time, while another person is awed into silence. A law of association may be struck by the Redeemer; but the links of association being different in the different persons, the thoughts suggested and the feelings started are not the same in each case. When we take up a book and read it, the benefit we gain from that book does not consist merely in the information which it conveys. The book may contain a number of original thoughts, and thoughts also of great weight which are not original; and so they suggest trains of thinking that are far-reaching; and this, be it understood, apart from the plain import of the

thoughts themselves. There may be sentences that we can ponder for hours, just because they give hints of topics that we had not thought of, or at least had not thought of in the way that is now suggested to the mind.

In looking at Christ, then, it is not merely that we become acquainted with notable truths and facts, but it is this, that a new world of truth is called into being by the suggestive power of his personality. We have but to put ourselves in contact with him, allowing him to move us, when all at once there is kindled within us a consciousness that we had not before. Take the following illustration. The Apostle Peter, having toiled all night and had taken nothing, the Saviour tells him to let down the net. Surprised at the command, he yet obeys; when, behold, they inclose a multitude of fishes, so that the net begins to break. Now, though Peter is greatly astonished, and we might suppose that he would express his gratitude to the Saviour, his feelings do not flow in that direction at present. He surprises us by a movement we would not have thought of. "He fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for *I am a sinful man*, O Lord." While this feeling of personal sinfulness is suitable at all times, yet under the circumstances it is peculiar. There was no attempt

on the part of Christ to teach the doctrine of sin or the doctrine of holiness, and yet both doctrines struck the mind of the apostle at that moment. This shows that persons can be affected in a certain way without any direct efforts being put forth to make them feel in that way. Yea, sometimes direct efforts fail, while those that are indirect succeed. A pure and exalted individual may be silent, and yet virtue goes forth from him. In view of his presence, one man may have a new thought and another man a new feeling; while again, one may find that evil habits are giving away, but another finds that his evil habits are really strengthened.

As we study the case of Peter, we can see that he had a number of feelings besides the feeling of sin. He was excited and somewhat dazed, feeling at the same time his unworthiness. It is wonderful what an array of emotions will be started in the soul by an act, a word, or a person. Indeed, whenever we are aroused from the centre, there is generally a collection of feelings working out in different ways, and these sometimes losing themselves in one leading passion. There is vastly more going on within us than we know. Peter felt how utterly insignificant he was, because Christ was seen to be great. The feeling of

littleness is generally awakened by the perception of greatness. A storm on sea or land that sweeps all before it, a vast range of mountains whose summits are lost in the clouds, the eternal stars as they shine in silence in the far depths of heaven, will impress us with a sense of our nothingness. Leonardo da Vinci says, "We should place a light background in contrast to a shadow, and a dark background to a mass of light." Rembrandt varied this principle. "He opposed to the shadow a still deeper tone, and to the light a still more vivid brilliance: light against light, and darkness against dark." Whichever way we bring out the contrast, the sinful soul is little, and the Sinless Saviour is great.

I am prompted to think of *Christ* in the *imagination*. Whether he is called "the chief corner-stone" or "the morning star," it is the imagination that is struggling to make him tangible to our consciousness. It is deeply interesting to notice to what an extent the imagination can be traced throughout the Bible. The striking figures of Scripture show the working of a sanctified imagination; show that the pictorial faculty has been made use of by the Spirit of God in the great work of redemption. It is certainly remarkable that so much of the Bible is in the form of poetry,

and not in the form of prose. It thus falls pleasantly on the ear, and as pleasantly goes to the heart. It is exceedingly suggestive that the Lord of glory did not merely become incarnate, but that he became incarnate in human speech; so that the laborer in the field, the mechanic in the shop, and the merchant at the counter, have each a kind of Christly language—the form and warmth being there by the aid of a spiritual imagination. There is a bridge in an Austrian city that has twelve statues of Christ. These represent him as a prophet, priest, king, shepherd, pilot, physician, carpenter, and so forth. Different men passing over the bridge behold the Saviour according to what they are. The sick man sees him as a physician, the sailor as a pilot, the mechanic as a carpenter, the sinner as a priest. Thus he fits all classes.

If our imagination were not cultivated by the word of God, we could not form a proper ideal of Christ. The realism of the Evangelic Narratives is the result of a pure imagination. When we consider in what a small compass the life of the Saviour is found, and yet with what definiteness he stands out before Christendom, we see that he is made quite real to us. He seems to grow as we look at him. The ideal of Christ in the imagination does not

remain there in solitary grandeur. If we give him a central place in any faculty of the soul, he influences all the other faculties. He is like the sun in the midst of the system—"nothing is hid from the heat thereof." Our mind from its nature wants many ideals; those of knowledge and skill, of love and beauty, of power and peace. It is a valuable remark of Coleridge, that the Bible differs from all the so-called sacred books in its strong and frequent recommendations of "truth." Christ is the summing up of the whole scheme of Scripture truth. A system of theology could be evolved from the personality of the God-man. He is the Christian's Bible, as well as the Christian's salvation. Thus if a man would be wise and useful, he can be made such by having Christ formed in him the hope of glory.

Glance now at the *medical* side of the Saviour's life. There is no reason to think that the Gospel history gives us a full account of the number of cures which Christ performed. If we knew all the cures, the nature of the diseases, and the way the persons were healed, the picture would be an exciting one. The diary of such a physician as Jesus would form an interesting book. Suppose, however, that he had healed no one, and that no one ever thought of coming to him to be healed, what

a difference there would have been in his life. And yet, if he had never acted as a physician, we should not have thought that anything was wanting. There would have been a complete life, irrespective of the healing characteristic. We thus see that the medical side of Christ's life was an extra good. Healing so many sick people was nothing less than a manifestation of supererogatory benevolence. It was, so to speak, an enlargement of life and being. It was adding on a section of love to a person who was already most lovely. The wealth of the Redeemer and of redemption is thus all the more striking.

The miracles of Christ are allegories of salvation. What he did with reference to the bodies of men, he now does with reference to their souls. The blind were made to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, just as now the dark mind is enlightened, the heedless made attentive, and the silent tongue led to praise God. Every form of disease was healed, and every form of sin is now destroyed. As the sick expressed their sense of need with different degrees of intensity, so do fallen souls at present. The means used in curing were not always the same, just as now men are brought to repentance by different agencies. Sometimes persons were carried into the presence

of the Great Healer by the benevolent, and sometimes friends interceded for those at a distance, just as we lead the wanderer to Christ, and plead for those who are far away. But as in all cases faith was required, so now he only that believeth shall be saved. Thus the Saviour has been living in two worlds of action and influence, the one shadowing forth the other.

Aspirations that are *unbounded* may be awakened in certain minds by the presence of Christ. Everything about him was upon an extended scale. He had plans that related to the whole world of man, and that went back to an eternity that is past, and forward to an eternity that is to come. At the moment he was upon earth, he was also in heaven. Looking at the Mediator with his infinite contrasts, we seem to be carried away to limitless realms. There we mingle in scenes that match with our immortal nature. We breathe the air of those higher worlds that shine afar, and shine forever. We catch the notes of jubilant worshippers as they chant the high praises of God. We rest for the time with the royal people who fill the great immensities, or walk with the companies of the celestial among the gardens and groves of the saved, with no evil thing to come near or to fear. What a

relief it is to us, who are worried and wearied on the scorching days of life, that we can fly away to the great kingdoms of delight, and there spend an hour in reflections that bring peace to the soul. What a blessing it is to have a nature that has longings for unbounded good, so that when we are moved upon by a great personality we can soar upward to the place where that good is found, and can lay hold of the fruit that grows there, and drink of the streams that flow among the hills and glens of immortality.

How plain it is that we are made for God, and that we shall never be well till we find him. In the language of St. Barnard, we can say, "Nothing, Lord, that is thine can suffice me without thyself, nor can anything that is mine without myself be pleasing to thee." We may tie ourselves down with the cords of earthly occupation and may weigh ourselves down with the burdens of earthly care, but after all, when Christ is near and dear to us and the far-away country of life comes into view, we then betake ourselves to that land of peacefulness and plenty, finding quite soon that what we are so anxious to get here, is as nothing to what we find there. We are too much like children who run to catch the rainbow, and like them we come no nearer to the

radiant glory that charms us on. It is wonderful that we, who are made to be so manly, are yet so mean, and that we can afford to torment ourselves into pleasures which, when we get them, instantly fly away; not remembering that in those infinite commonwealths are joys which bear the stamp of eternity.

When we attempt to look into the divine and the everlasting, we meet the *indefinite* and *mysterious*. Even our greatest passions, our loftiest thoughts, and our grandest ideals, shade off into the indefinite. Our life is always a feeble life when we can see straight through it. That which we can weigh and measure is sure to be light and limited. There are realms in the human soul that have never yet been explored. We simply stand at the borders of them and look off through twilight into darkness; hearing now and then the sound of ocean waves, and knowing from that sound that an ocean is there; but just what are the characteristics of that ocean we cannot tell. Infinite problems tax us. A good that we can fully explain is not *the* good. The Bible speaks of "the unsearchable riches of Christ," showing that there is a phase of the indefinite and the mysterious about the greatest work and wonder of time. With God there is no mystery. But we shall never be like him; shall only be

approaching him forever. There is a Tamul proverb which tells us that "flowers beyond our reach are sacred to God." There are many flowers of that kind. We see them dimly on the jutting crags of the divine mountains; catch a little of the sweet perfume that comes from them; wish we could reach them; but we reach them not: they are sacred to God.

There is suggested to us by the personality of Christ the *vanity of mere human endeavor*. The Son of God and Son of man absolutely *lived*. We only half live; sometimes not that. There was nothing of the fickle and the fleeting about him; nothing that might be clipped away with advantage, leaving the sound and the substantial as the heritage of his nature. His whole life was compact with the true and the good. When we look at this high Chieftain of the race, travelling in the greatness of his strength in order to carry out the one embassy of reconciliation, with none to aid or to cheer, we can see how much of the *absolutely real* there was about his works and his ways; and, by the contrast, how much of the *unreal* hangs about us as we thread our way to the infinite life. How intent we are at times in regard to sheer vanities; fierce and fighting if any one attempts to take these vanities away from us, as if our very existence were locked

up in them, and we should be dull and dead if we had them not.

Then what a great deal of human endeavor is misplaced, has no eternal value, is exhausting and not strengthening, is simply pain and perplexity to a God-created mind; and yet that same mind will wear itself out after it knows that the whole ends in vanity. It would seem that the creaturely spirit is in the midst of a great unrest, and that to escape from it, or at least to lose sight of it, earthly objects are held fast, and so the strange soul presses on with them in dead earnest, as if in that way it could find a degree of happiness. When we look, on the one hand, at the Saviour toiling to secure the salvation of a lost race, his whole being possessed with that great reality, and then look, on the other hand, at men eager with reference to the things of time, forgetting their eternal well being, we are amazed at the infatuation of mortals, acting as if some dire necessity were driving them on, heedless of consequences. There stands in a certain part of India an ancient mosque of great size. "Its chief gateway is one hundred and twenty feet in height, and the same in breadth. Inside this gateway is engraved on stone, in large characters, a remarkable sentence in Arabic. Literally translated, it is as follows, 'Jesus,

on whom be peace, has said, 'THE WORLD IS MERELY A BRIDGE; YOU ARE TO PASS OVER IT AND NOT TO BUILD YOUR DWELLINGS UPON IT.'"^{*}

Although the Saviour did not utter these words, they are full of wisdom. The most of men do build upon the bridge, instead of pressing on to the fair country that lies beyond.

The more I look at Christ, the more I see that the *permanent*, instead of the transient, demands the chief attention. He fixed his eye on movements that were eternal, while to objects that were local and limited he simply gave a passing notice. There is a great deal of the scenic and theatric about the life of man. The transient in certain cases is valuable and must be attended to, but this is only for a time. Not till we grasp immutable truth and immutable right shall we be satisfied. We must have principles that will stand the test of eternity, and an unchangeable God to rest in when that eternity is reached. If I am to love purity a million of years from this time, I must love purity now. I need not be deceived in regard to my fate in the great hereafter. My soul was given me to think, and I must think truly. I am either held fast by eternal sin or eternal holiness. If I am to be settled in heaven after death, I must be settled in heaven before death.

^{*} See "Life of Dr. Duff," vol. ii., p. 164. New York ed.

PART II.

GREAT THOUGHTS OF THE BIBLE WHICH PERTAIN TO
CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF SALVATION.

CHAPTER I.

A GROUP OF GREAT THOUGHTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

BEFORE I take up the main subject, I want just to call attention to a principle of order that is seen in the Pentateuch. At the very beginning of Genesis we notice the great working week of the Almighty. The inorganic kingdom is marked off, then the organic, and the whole ending with man. Myth or legend does not appear, but sober truth in condensed form and sublime language. Then the genealogies are exceedingly significant. We behold races, civilizations, and histories. Persons and places, times and events, are carefully noted. We have fuller information of the ancient world from such sources than from any writings outside of the Bible. By the aid of the tenth chapter of Genesis, Mr. Rawlinson has been able to give a very interesting account of the planting of ancient nations. Order is seen in the description of the ark of Noah and of the various animals which entered into it.

The different stages of the flood are noted with great exactness. The confusion of tongues is mentioned, and how the people were compelled to form settlements in different countries. The number of the persons who went down into Egypt of the family of Jacob is stated; the time they were to be there in bondage is stated also; and when they left, the number of the men who were fit for war is mentioned. Notice also how the children of Israel in the Wilderness are organized. The leading families, number of the tribes, rulers of the tribes, standards of the tribes, are mentioned. Order shows itself in all that pertained to the tabernacle, the sacred vessels, offerings, festivals, priests. The different places where the people encamped in their wanderings from Egypt to the Holy Land are specified. The victories that were gained on the east of the Jordan and the doings of Balaam from first to last are stated with exactness. We are even told that the persons who died because of their sinful connection with the Medianites were "twenty and four thousand." The boundaries of the land of Canaan are definitely marked, and the persons are named who were to divide the territory among the tribes. The Levitical cities were to be "forty-eight." It is worthy of special notice

also, that *sixteen* chapters in Exodus, *twenty* in Leviticus, and *sixteen* in Numbers *begin* with the words—"And the Lord spake unto Moses." Count how many times Moses is mentioned in the Bible.

Coming now to our theme, the first great thought of the Old Testament is that of God. This in reality *is* the *first* great thought. In the opening verse of the Bible and in the first line of the Bible it is God. He is the great nominative acting at the beginning and acting all the way through. The man who reads his Bible and is not affected by this infinite thought, is like a person living at the foot of Mont Blanc who only looks at the stream that rushes along, looks at the wild flowers that grow on its margin, but never lifts his eyes to the great mountain with its snow-capped summit and its silent rivers of eternal ice. Scripture accepts God as a fact. Monotheism is the first faith of the human race. The idea that man began with polytheism and advanced to the belief in one God, is nothing but theory. Idolatry shows that the race have deteriorated. When we trace back the history of the great nations to the utmost limit, we strike upon primitive monotheism. The first men were neither savages, nor fetich worshippers.

As we scan the pages of the Old Testament

we are struck with the variety of conceptions which relate to God. He is not chiselled out as some noted idol is chiselled out, and then left in blank isolation. He is spoken of as from everlasting to everlasting, the king of the ages. Whether I go to heaven or to hell, or to any imaginable point of existence, God is there. "He giveth to the young ravens that cry, and to the beasts their food." "He withholdeth no good thing from them that walk uprightly."

That there is no God but the *one God* is the doctrine that is emphasized. There was a contention among the ancient nations as to which God is the greatest. When Moses went to Pharaoh and asked that the Israelites might be permitted to go and worship the Lord God, he asks, "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord; I will not let Israel go." The trial that took place long afterwards on Mount Carmel was to settle the point whether Baal or Jehovah is God. The sign by fire was given, as had been proposed, and so the assembled multitude cried out, "The Lord he is the God, the Lord he is the God." When Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, came up against the defenced cities of Judah, he had an idea that his god was the greatest. He asks, "Where are the gods of Hamath and

Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their land out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" Thus not even *Jehovah* could stand against his god, as he imagined. How affectingly Hezekiah prays in view of this thought: "Now, O Lord, our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even *thou only*." The Jewish people were a class of witnesses, whose business it was to prove to the nations that *Jehovah* is God alone. Even though they sink into idolatry at times, it is a noteworthy fact that the inspired writers never describe God in a way that is imperfect. Man may change, but God changes not.

A second great thought is the *striking nature* and *outwardness* of the *divine government* as that was carried forward among the Jewish people. Supernatural manifestations appear ever and anon. They are seen with Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and many others. The ten plagues of Egypt, the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, the parting of the Red Sea to let the redeemed people pass over, manna sent for forty years, but never sent on the Sabbath,

water that was made to flow from the rock, are all evidences of a supernatural system and quite striking in their nature. We see also how God communicated his will as to whether his people should go to war, whether they would gain the victory, and what should be done in certain great crises of the nation's history. Strange sights were seen, voices of God were heard, and angels conversed with men. The supernatural bursts forth at times with as startling an effect as the ushering into existence of a new flower right before our eyes. Such striking manifestations are not seen in any land at present.

The outward structure of the divine government is also peculiar. When the Jews were faithful to God, they were blessed in temporal things, and when they were unfaithful judgments came down upon them. The principle is thus stated: "If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, then the Lord thy God will set thee up high above all the nations of the earth. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store." "But if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy

basket and thy store." Sometimes a discussion would arise among the people whether they gained more by the service of God, or by the service of idols. It was their belief at times that everything went better with them when they worshipped idols, and so they would not worship God. In the book of Jeremiah they address the prophet in this way: "As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will burn incense unto the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings unto her, as our fathers, kings, and princes; for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil." No doubt God in his mercy did not always punish them *at once*; and so the fact that they prospered while in the midst of idolatry was attributed to their gods, and not to the true God, who is long suffering. I am not aware that the divine government has assumed the same form among any people as it did among the Jews in the times of the Old Testament. It had a literalness then and a particularity which were peculiar. When we at present behold certain persons greatly afflicted and certain persons greatly prospered, we cannot always say that the one class are wicked and the other righteous. It sometimes happens that the good suffer more than the

bad. Still judgments do fall upon the wicked and blessings come to the righteous.

From the fact that *temporal rewards* and *punishments* were made so prominent in the government over Israel, persons have drawn the inference that the doctrine of immortality is not revealed in the Old Testament. I should say that the doctrine of immortality was taken for granted by the Jewish people, and consequently little was said in regard to it; even as the Fourth of July is taken for granted by the American people, and they find no need of speaking about it all the time as a national holiday. As the Egyptians believed in rewards and punishments after death, it would be strange if the Jews did not believe in the same, seeing they lived so long among that people. But the strangest thing of all would be that the race chosen of God and favored with the true religion should know nothing of a future life. It seems to us next to impossible for any one to work out a holy character who did not know but that death might end all. A religion that is bounded by the present life is Sadducean and destitute of vitality. The translation of Enoch and Elijah pointed to the immortality of the soul. There are passages that teach the doctrine: "I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I

awake with thy likeness." "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." "Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." We learn from the epistle to the Hebrews that "Abraham looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." It is mentioned also that "others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection." The Old Testament is not silent touching the doctrine of immortality. Even the Rig Veda points to the immortality of the soul: "He who gives alms goes to the highest place in heaven; he goes to the gods." "Where there is eternal light, in the world where the sun is placed, in that immortal imperishable world place me, O Soma. Where life is free, in the third heaven of heavens, where the worlds are radiant, there make me immortal!"

A third great thought of the Old Testament is *redemption*. This runs through the whole like a line of gold. The Old Testament gives us theology, and its power lies in the fact that it is redemptive. Everywhere we behold the blood of the innocent; the blood without which there is no remission. The thought that runs through the Old Testament is not merely that God is

merciful, but it is the thought of sacrifice, the lamb slain upon the altar, and its blood poured out as an atonement for the guilty. God is merciful, but his mercy flows along a redemptive channel. Redemption begins after the fall with the sacrifices of the first family, and then keeps on through the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations. Redemption connects itself with a person: the seed of the woman, the Angel of the Lord, Messiah, the Prince of Peace, Immanuel. This person "is wounded for our transgressions," "is cut off, but not for himself." He whose name is the BRANCH is to come and sit upon his throne and be a priest upon his throne; and in the last book of the Old Testament we are told in plain language that the Lord himself is to come, even the Messenger of the covenant. The person called *Jehovah* is generally to be viewed as the God of revelation, the God of redemption, the God who assumes at times the human appearance, and finally becomes man. The entire ancient economy with its altars and priests, prophecies and promises, was but the shadow of the great Reality. The New Testament is wrapped up in the Old, and the Old Testament is made clear in the New.

The fourth great thought of the Old Testament is *purity*. "Holiness to the Lord" is

the one text. The rewards for obedience and punishments for disobedience press upon the mind the necessity of holiness. Everything pertaining to divine worship seems to have been arranged so as to make clear the idea of purity. The altar and the laver were the first objects which proclaimed that truth as one looked into the tabernacle or temple. All the vessels of divine service must be clean, the animals for sacrifice must be without blemish, the priests must be consecrated, and the people who come before God must not come in a defiled state. Hence the frequent washings, the sprinkling with blood, the holy place, and the holy of holies. The classification of beasts that were clean and beasts that were unclean, and the fact that all tainted with leprosy must stay by themselves, teach the same truth. Redemption itself is a lesson upon purity. This is really the culminating thought; all is in order to this. Let this be wanting, and religion is nothing but a theatric show. The people might sink into all kinds of errors and sink into all kinds of wickedness, yet the Old Testament never changes in its demand for purity. In this it differs from the so-called sacred books of the heathen, for they are scarred with evil. If we ask, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy

holy hill?" the answer is definite: "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." To gain the divine approbation, to reach heaven, one must be holy. Sin must be condemned in ourselves, condemned in our friends, condemned everywhere. He who labors to be holy, fights with himself to be holy, trusts and prays to be holy, weeps to be holy, is the true man.

The fifth great thought of the Old Testament is the *theology* of the *heart* as expressed in the *Psalms*. "In the time of David the Lyric poetry of the Hebrews attained its highest splendor. The scattered wild flowers of the country were now gathered and planted, as a royal garland on Mount Zion." "As David in his own age gave his own feelings and sentiments general currency, and rendered his own style the predominant one in the songs of the temple, so the book was destined to become the book of devotional song for every age, for all nations, and all hearts."* The Psalter is a Bible within the Bible. It is in the centre of the word of God, forming as it were its heart, and animating the entire body of truth. No part of Scripture is so experimental as the *Psalms*. The working of the inner life is laid open to view. The Psalter is the mirror of the

* Herder, "Spirit of Hebrew Poetry," vol. ii., pp. 222, 226.

pious man. There is not a feeling peculiar to the religious mind but that is expressed in the Psalms. It is a remark of Hengstenberg, that "the radical character of the Psalms is *feeling*." Of course it is a fact that the theology of the intellect is found there as the basis of the theology of the heart; but yet emotion is the chief thing. Let any one read through the Psalter, and note down the number and variety of the feelings mentioned, and he will be astonished. If a person is perplexed he will naturally turn to the Psalms for light and comfort. The sick, suffering, and persecuted go there by a kind of instinct. Hope and fear, penitence and faith, joy and grief, praise and prayer, are sketched to the life in the Psalms. The feelings of danger and deliverance, courage and thanksgiving, pain and peace, are truly expressed. There is great freedom in regard to the expression of feeling. Sometimes a degree of *abandon* is revealed in deep depression and exultant gladness, as if the feelings must be stated just as they are. In no literature of heathen nations can we find anything like the Psalmody of Scripture. Considering its spirituality, the wonder is why its chief parts were not found in the New Testament instead of in the Old.

Not one of us knows how much we are

indebted to the Psalms in the matter of private and public worship. All the Christian Churches have been carried along age after age by their teaching; and the most formal of these churches have been kept from utter lifelessness by their influence. To what extent the languages of Christendom have been enriched by the Hymnology of the Bible no one can tell. The inspired odes have given to us figures of speech, forms of expression, poetical turns of thought, and also a certain kind of aroma and atmosphere. The hymns that we sing in our homes and sanctuaries are oftentimes echoes of the Psalms, and there is no telling how much our hymn-writers have been moved by the lyric poetry of the Hebrews. It is difficult to account for the great wealth and great extent of hymnology in the different Christian countries unless we point to the Psalter as the source of inspiration. "For two thousand years have the Psalms frequently and differently been translated and imitated, and still there are many new formations of their much-embracing and rich manner possible. They are flowers, which change their appearance in every time and in every soil—but always bloom in the beauty of youth. Just because the Psalter contains the simplest lyrical expressions of the most diversified feel-

ings—it is *the hymn book for all times*.” Religion seems to be treasured up in spiritual songs as in a golden casket. The French deists could not make up a liturgy without the help of the Psalms. Thus seeking help from the very Book which they despised. The Fifty-first Psalm will be a classic to every penitent heart till time shall end, and the Twenty-third will comfort many a soul as it passes “through the valley of the shadow of death.”

Such are the five great thoughts of the Old Testament. God and his government go together, redemption and purity go together, while the hymnological part forms a suitable conclusion. With these leading conceptions to guide the mind, the Old Testament is instinct with meaning. Wherever we read, we find these thoughts as centres. Inferior ideas can be connected with them, can be made to move around them, can gain strength from them. In a single chapter we may see the Divine Being and the divine government, redemption and purity, and the fact of praise because of these. In one historical man, like Abraham or Moses, the five great thoughts are illustrated and enforced. The mother of Samuel, no less than Samuel himself, proclaims them all. Even in the book of Esther, the five great thoughts are implied.

CHAPTER II.

CERTAIN GREAT THOUGHTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE twenty-seven small books of the New Testament contain twenty-seven great thoughts. The germs are found in the four Gospels; and the Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypse are the unfolding of these.

I. MARKED SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT VIEW OF GOD.

The *New Testament* reveals to us *new* intricacies and *new* glories of God. The soul is expanded by these. The mind that has been cultivated by the powers of the Christian system is deeper and more radiant than the mind that was cultivated by the powers of the Jewish system.

1. We learn from the New Testament that there are *three persons* in the Godhead. These three persons *constitute* the *one* God. Remove the Son or the Spirit, and God would not exist. When we use the language, "God the Father,

God the Son, and God the Spirit, three in one," we do not mean that there are three Gods having one and the same plan, but *three divine persons* having *one* and the *same nature*. There is only one set of attributes for the three persons. We may speak of the infinite Father, infinite Son, and infinite Spirit, because the *one infinite mind* is used by all of these. There are not three infinities; only one infinite God. The trinal idea is a favorite one with many distinguished scholars. They point to the body, soul, and spirit as an illustration of it. This, however, is very different from that of the one God as subsisting in three persons.

According to the teaching of Christianity, there is even an *order* among the persons of the Godhead; for we are "baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." There is a something which distinguishes each person, so that the identity of the one is never lost in the other. There is no higher and lower, no before and after, among the persons. All are equal, all eternal, all divine. The subject is clear enough along certain lines. It is only when we reach a certain point that mystery comes down upon us. No man has a right to say that the doctrine of a triune God is unreasonable. It is above reason, but not contrary to it. Indeed, it is a

question whether it is not harder to conceive of the *eternal existence* of God, than it is to conceive of the *tripersonality* of God. I am not sure but that we can see farther into the latter, than we can into the former.

Let any Biblical Christian give an account of his religious experience, and he will of necessity bring in the three persons of the Godhead. Whenever the trinity is denied, the fundamental doctrines of Christianity are denied with it, and the system that is formed is simply bald naturalism, having neither warmth nor life. It is worthy of notice that the faith of the Church in all the Christian centuries is trinitarian. The doctrine is really settled and sealed for all time, and there is very little chance for any new arguments to be brought against it.

2. God's *love* is made prominent in the New Testament. Our word "God" is from the Saxon, and means *good*. We call him the chief good, because he is infinite life, infinite perfection, infinite blessedness. Catching the element of moral quality, we speak of the *goodness* of God. He is not merely almighty and intelligent, but he is the *Holy One*. The Bible puts a new meaning into the Greek word *Theos*, which the art-loving Greeks never imagined, when it says, "God is *love*." The

plan of salvation is the outcome and image of this high character of the Deity. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This suggests the thought that there is no manifestation of love so great as that which is expressed in the gift of God's Son for the redemption of men, and it implies also that the divine glory is seen to a greater extent in the work of redemption than in the work of creation. The entire action of God outside of himself may be viewed as a specimen of benevolence or giving, but the magnificent donation of mercy is simply priceless.

We are always at a disadvantage in describing any attribute of God. Our thought comes short of the reality, and our language comes short of the thought. His love is lovelier and his mercy more merciful than the highest reach of our thinking. That fact is encouraging to those who feel the greatness of their sins, and wish to escape from them. Although it is in harmony with the nature of God that he should be merciful, it would be improper for a guilty man to say that God is under *obligation* to show mercy to him. Mercy is a favor, and cannot be claimed. An accountable creature, though sinful, can assert that God *must do right*; but that is a different thing from saying

that God *must provide salvation* for fallen men, and if he does not he will do wrong. Salvation is of grace, and not of debt, and for that reason one can be thankful and can praise God for his unspeakable gift. If man is simply getting his rights when salvation is provided for him, thankfulness and praise will not easily spring up in his heart.

3. The *fatherhood* of God demands attention. It is safe to affirm that in not one of the religions of men, and in not one of the sacred books of men is the fatherhood of God presented as a leading doctrine. The thought appears in the Old Testament, but it is stated with greater fulness in the New. Lest there should be danger of viewing God too exclusively as a Being of eternal power and justice, we are taught to address him as Father. The Lord's Prayer has been one great means of spreading the doctrine of the fatherhood of God, while the Lord himself has been the chief teacher of that doctrine. As a royal way to the human heart, there is none like it. It changes doubt into confidence, fear into love, despair into hope, and sadness into joy. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." It is significant that the word "Father"

is not deemed sufficient, and so the word "heavenly" is linked on to it. In this way, the fatherhood is brought a step nearer to man, having about it a celestial radiance, thus charming the soul and hastening it on to the country where God has fixed his habitation. Deeply impressive are the words of Christ when about to return to heaven: "I ascend unto *my* Father, and *your* Father; and to my God, and your God."

As we examine carefully the Scripture passages relating to the fatherhood of God, we notice three different applications of the great truth. First, it points to that ineffable relation in the constitution of the Godhead which subsists between the Father and the Son. Such Fathership and Sonship of course never can be equalled. All beneath is but the faint shadow of the primal reality. Secondly, God is the Father of all those who are *spiritually* like him. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they* are the *sons* of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." These persons having experienced a divine change in their character, are made sons of God by *adoption*, and consequently are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Thirdly, God is

the Father of all men. He is called "the Father of spirits." "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" Here fatherhood looks very much like the sympathy and compassion of the *Creator* as he views his *lost creatures*. Although the human spirit is struck with sin and is homeless, it still is of great value, and is the centre of great interest. However low it may sink, the stamp of divinity can never be wholly effaced from it, and God never can forget the work of his hands. He wants to lift up fallen men to the position of real sons of God, so that with the *heart* they may call him *Father*. If the doctrine of God's fatherhood makes men to feel that they are *better in the divine estimation* than had been supposed, the doctrine in that case is misunderstood and misapplied. Human depravity is not lessened a particle by it. God hates sin, while at the same time he shows kindness to the man who is guilty of it. We must be careful not to press the fatherhood of God too far, imagining that there is only one family in the universe; thus making saint and sinner, seraph and Satan, to be members of it. The kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness are from their nature distinct. The fatherhood of God is powerful for good when rightly distinguished. It surprises man into new

views of the Deity, and of that salvation of which he is the Author.

II. MARKED SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT VIEW OF SALVATION.

What was the *supreme object* which the Son of God had in view when he came to this earth? He speaks of a “work” he had to do. What was that work? To say that he came to reveal the mercy of God, came to show a perfect example in living and dying, is just to say that Christ is not the author of eternal salvation. Others, coming nearer to the truth, inform us that the Eternal Word assumed human nature in order to purify souls. This does not meet the case, because to purify souls is the work of the *Holy Spirit*. Thus there is no work of Christ at all, and consequently no need of an incarnation. All such views miss the chief point, namely, that of atonement. “Christ came to give his *life* a *ransom* for many.” Substitution is the great doctrine of the Bible; the only doctrine that satisfies the guilty mind and the justice of God. “It is worthy of notice, that in every context where Christ mentions his work of obedience, he gives indications, more or less express, that he was conscious of standing in a unique position between God and man, and of mediating

between them. And he never leaves his hearers to suppose that he was but *one of many*. He uniformly speaks of himself as performing a work in a mediatorial capacity, and acting as *one for many*.* If there is no atonement, there is no justification by faith. Justification in that case is simply *being just*, and so it is lost in sanctification. Salvation must first be objective before it can be subjective. The cause must exist before the effect. The Saviour must *die* before we can *live*. If there is no *redemption* that upholds law, there is no *remedy* that enables us to keep the law. God's holy nature must first be *satisfied*, before our sinful nature can be *sanctified*.

As out of unbounded love the Son of God suffered in order to work out salvation, such a work is nothing but pure merit. The entire movement of salvation was a movement of righteousness that was extra-legal, and being that of an infinite person it had infinite worth. The *merit* of the *God-man* counterbalances the *demerit* of *fallen man*, and so there is a complete salvation for all who are willing to be saved by free grace. Sinful men have felt that merit was needed in order to gain eternal life, and many of them have suffered and served, hoping to purchase it; but with all

* Smeaton, "Sayings of Jesus on the Atonement," p. 142.

their efforts they were not fully satisfied. What a relief, then, that infinite merit is found in Christ.

While it is true that men are saved by an act of mercy, it is also true that the mercy acts through the medium of justice. The judicial nature of God having been satisfied by the propitiatory sacrifice of his Son, it is now suitable and safe for mercy to flow forth to the penitent. It is this blending of justice and mercy in salvation that makes it fit the soul at all points, and lays such a sure foundation that the mind can rest upon it with the utmost composure.

Inasmuch as the entire redemptive righteousness was for sinners, and not for the God-man himself, we see the great wealth which belongs to such disinterested action. Christ's one obedience unto death was exceptional and extraordinary in the government of God. Although certain actions of men bear a resemblance to a vicarious atonement, and in that way show that it is not unreasonable, still as no accountable creature could ever furnish merit so as to save a sinful soul, there is nothing of the same nature as the atonement in existence. This very singularity of the divine redemption enhances its glory and value, making it the wonder of time and eternity. It

seems evident also that this unusual scheme of salvation must have meanings that we have not yet detected and a philosophy that we have not yet mastered, and probably never will while we remain upon earth.

“The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world,” and the world from its foundation points to that slain Lamb. Although there is not an “eternal atonement,” yet the atonement is an eternal thought of God. In the heart of Infinite Excellence there is a cross, but it casts no shadow. The shadow belongs to the earth and time, reminding us evermore of the great tragedy. All things point to the Crucified One. The cross stands in the midst of the centuries. The soul and the sky are Christological. The great philosophers have pointed to it, the march of history has proclaimed it, and Scripture has made it the key which opens the gates of life. It is seen to-day in the conflicts of nations, and in the hopes of brighter years to come. The child at birth has the cross beside it, and when it dies the cross is the passport by which it gains admittance into heaven. The very angels who surround the throne of God have a glory because of the cross, and their position is surer and their robes finer because they dwell in Immanuel’s Land. In the winter nights we

see it among the stars; in the long summer days it glistens in the clouds; in the spring the trees and flowers hold it forth, and amid the sadness of autumn hours it speaks to us all. The priests and prophets and great deliverers of men were all Christological. Their faces turned towards Calvary and the cross. The God-man stands at the summit of life, and "on his head are many crowns."

III. MARKED SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

Let it be proved that the Lord Jesus did not rise from the dead, and at once Christianity falls to the ground, and Christ stands before the world as an impostor. He declared repeatedly that he was to rise from the dead, and even stated that this event was to take place after three days; but to those who believed in his Messiahship and to those who did not believe the thought was so strange that it did not seem to enter into any of their minds. His death itself, to say nothing of his resurrection, was so utterly contrary to all the views of his disciples that it scattered to the winds their hopes of the new kingdom, and left them completely helpless in the presence of their enemies.

We will move forward step by step, that the matter may strike us just as it is.

Christ is taken down from the cross by kind friends, the body wrapped in linen with spices all about it, and then gently laid in the supulchre, the intention being to come again at the close of the Sabbath and finish the anointing. That anticipated anointing never took place. It is well, however, that they were so artless in their movements. Nothing is so true as love. That no theft of the body might be made possible, and that no false report should be spread that the Saviour had risen, the supulchre is sealed and a band of soldiers placed there to watch. This is well, as it shuts out all chance of deception. In spite of all the care, however, "The Lord is risen indeed." Peter and John enter the supulchre: they are startled: "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." The Saviour appears to the apostles at different times and places. He speaks to them, eats food in their presence, wants to convince them of his identity; thus manifesting great patience with their unbelief. It is evident that they will not believe that he has risen unless they are compelled to. They are not like a jury who are *prejudiced in favor* of the prisoner's crime; for they are *prejudiced*

against the Saviour's resurrection. They are in no state to be imposed upon. Christ even appears to five hundred brethren at once, so that there is no want of witnesses.

The course of life henceforth of the apostles can only be explained by the fixed *fact* of the resurrection. They could no more deny this fact than they could deny their own existence. It was no theory which they had started and wanted people to believe. It was not a dream, not a fancy, not an opinion; but it was a tangible fact, and was just as certain as the rising or setting of the sun. There was no such thing therefore as turning aside those witnesses of the risen Lord. They were threatened, persecuted, imprisoned, but this made no difference. No kind of treatment could make them deny a fact. The most of them were even put to death, and thus they sealed their testimony with their blood. The first Christians were looked upon as obdurate men; but their obduracy was that of principle. They would do right even if the heavens should fall. There was an inspiration about their determined faith. Lookers-on were attracted by what they beheld, and became the followers of the risen Lord.

Thus having found the miracle of the resurrection, each miracle that Christ wrought, and

Christ himself the great miracle, all stand out with the distinctness of eternal truth. If there is no certainty here, then a lie has been effectual in establishing a kingdom of righteousness.

IV. MARKED SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FACT THAT BIBLICAL THEOLOGY IS PRACTICAL.

The deepest thoughts of Scripture are not mere specimens of philosophy. They are philosophical in the highest sense; still as we are sinners needing restoration to the image of God, the doctrines point to the *life*. When we have that finished statement that "God is a Spirit," the Divine Being is not left on a far-away height, where he feels no interest in us, but he is brought close to the heart of universal man, and each one is told that "they that worship him must *worship him in spirit and in truth*." That is a blow struck at formalism and heathenism. Is the doctrine of the atonement stated? The practical words meet us: "We have redemption through his blood, the *forgiveness of sins*." Is it the resurrection of Christ? "He was raised again for our *justification*." Is it the doctrine of the second advent? "*Watch*; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Is it the happiness of the future state? "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall

see God." Is it the misery of the lost? "*Fear him* who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Are the high doctrines of foreknowledge and predestination announced? Quickly we are told, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be *conformed to the image of his Son.*" We are not to be diverted by the transcendent nature of these truths, but we are to see that their design is, that we should become like Christ. Do we want a philosophy of the creation, and a statement of the feeling it should awaken in us? Here are the sublime words: "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: *to whom be glory for ever.*" In the eternal working out of the divine plan and the eternal working out of our life, God is to be glorified. Even the full meaning of redemption is not gained when millions are saved by its power. The entire redemptive movement is a manifestation of the divine glory. We never see any good thing aright, unless we see God in every good thing. It is certainly the highest kind of practicality when the whole scheme of truth leads us to have proper *feelings* and *acts* with reference to *God*. Even the mysteries of Scripture, and the mysteries of creation as well, are of great use in teaching us humility, submission, and reverence.

Without going farther, it is plain enough that the doctrines of the Christian system tend to the development of Christian character. And this should be noted that the greater the number of truths which we can weave into our character, the *richer* we make it. If the collective theology of the Bible could be wrought into our composition, so that we should have feelings to match with every truth, then we should be fine specimens of pious men, rounded and well balanced.

CHAPTER III.

EFFICACY OF CERTAIN HUMAN REMEDIES FOR SIN CONTRASTED WITH THE EFFICACY OF THE GREAT SALVATION.

It seems proper to turn aside for a short time that we may view the thoughts of men, as they stand in opposition to the thoughts of God, respecting a way of recovery. The divine remedy will suffer no loss by being put in contrast with human speculation. There is something about sin that is altogether peculiar, suggesting the thought that unless the remedy is equally peculiar it never can master the evil. Whether we make fallen man to be better or worse than has been supposed, in either case his efforts at self-restoration have failed. Let us glance at certain methods of cure which at present have a degree of popularity.

Education, we are told, will remove all evils from the soul. Only educate men, and no one will steal, nor defraud, nor set fire to a house, nor kill. Just as if all pickpockets

were ignorant men. Solomon and Lord Bacon were not kept from falling because they were superior in knowledge. No doubt education is a good thing, and Christian men are greatly in favor of it, as seen in the institutions of learning which they have started; but it has no power to make good the heart of man. If education were the great plan of salvation, then what we call sin would simply be *ignorance* or error; but we know quite well that sin and ignorance are not the same thing. Self-will and covetousness are not ignorance, malice and envy are not ignorance, the love of ease and the love of evil are not ignorance, pride and lawlessness are not ignorance. Sin is guilt, and it points to a vicious will and a vicious heart. Education may dry up some streams even as the sun does in its summer march through the sky, yet the great rivers flow on to the sea as they have been flowing for thousands of years. It is not light, however clear, that is going to chase depravity out of the land. You may have a school in every neighborhood, a treatise on science in every family, each person filled with knowledge, yet sin will reign. The rougher features of evil may be polished and smoothed down by education, a few warts of sin cut off here and there, ugly sores covered over; and yet

out of sight, in the blood, in the heart, the disease has the mastery.

We are living in what is called an age of science, and this science we are told is going to revolutionize the whole world of man. Suppose then that every person knows the exact distance of the heavenly bodies, how large they are, when the next eclipse of the sun and moon will take place, what light is and the law of gravitation, will that knowledge destroy sin? It would be a great comfort if it could be destroyed as easy as that. We know, however, that it will not be destroyed in that way. How is astronomy, and chemistry, and geology, and all the sciences combined going to root out inward depravity? The whole is a bright delusion. There is no connection between the remedy and the disease. What has *astronomy* to do with *sin*? Can a chemist sift out moral evil? Neither the one nor the other meets the difficulty. If you were sick would you think it reasonable to send for a geologist to come and cure you? No: you would say at once that there is no connection between geology and the curing of bodies. In like manner there is no connection between a knowledge of science and the curing of souls. Every man may be transformed into a philosopher, but not on that account is every man

transformed into a saint. The philosopher needs a divine remedy just as truly as the most ignorant person needs it.

It is not education, but Christ. And it is not merely Christ viewed as the Light, but it is Christ as the atoner and possessor of a divine life; a life which, introduced into the soul of man, breaks up the reign of death. You may even give a Bible to each person, that each may study and know what it contains, and yet the universal knowledge of the Bible will not make men universally good. You may even transport the whole human race to heaven, where knowledge is found in perfection, but that heavenly knowledge will not give you a race of heavenly men. No, no, all you can say about education is, that it is a subordinate means. It is good in its place, but the place is not that of purifying souls. There are men who even become worse by education, and not better. The truth is, there is nothing short of a remedial principle direct from Christ that can extirpate sin. "Culture," says Professor Shairp, "when it will not accept its proper place as secondary, but sets up to be the guiding principle of life, forfeits that which might be its highest charm. Indeed, even when it does not professedly turn its back on faith, yet if it claims to be paramount, it will gener-

ally be found that it has cultivated every side of man's nature but the devout one. There is no more forlorn sight than that of a man highly gifted, elaborately cultivated, with all the other capacities of his nature strong and active, but those of faith and reverence dormant. And this, be it said, is the pattern of man in which culture, made the chief good, would most likely issue." *

Æsthetic discipline is presented as another means by which to soften and subdue the rough nature of man. The soul must be made to face beauty wherever it can be found. The works of the great masters must be studied, that the mind may be lifted up out of its impurity, and made to move in a region of "sweetness and light." Paintings representing the finest scenes of nature must hang around our dwellings, and all the varied creations of an ethereal imagination must be ever present to our view, that we may be moulded and transformed by their influence. Statuary and architecture and all household arrangements must be chaste and beautiful, that we also may be the same. Poetry and music must charm and elevate the soul, that thus it may reach perfection.

If æsthetic culture has such power to purify

* "Culture and Religion," p. 168.

the human spirit, it is strange that a very depraved kind of depravity thrives most lustily in the midst of this very culture. Paris and Rome have artistic beauty in all its forms, but they have also an exceedingly large amount of most ugly sin. Taste and worldliness there go hand in hand together; painting and pleasure are not far apart; refinement and godlessness startle one by their close proximity; a beautiful civilization right in the midst of moral death. There are cathedrals even where art has lavished all its skill, and where, if saints could be made, they would be made there; and yet formalism bows before the most beautiful images, and spirituality dies in the midst of music that seems like the echo of heavenly choirs.

Mr. Ruskin, who may be considered a judge in such matters, uses this language: "A fit of unjust anger, petty malice, unreasonable vexation, or dark passion, cannot certainly, in a mind of ordinary sensibility, hold its own in the presence of a good engraving from any work of Angelico, Memling, or Perugino. But I nevertheless believe, that he who trusts much to such helps will find them fail him at his need; and that the dependence, in any great degree, on the presence or power of a picture, indicates a wonderfully feeble sense of the

presence and power of God. I do not think any man, who is thoroughly certain that Christ is in the room, will care what sort of pictures of Christ he has on its walls; and in the plurality of cases, the delight taken in art of this kind is, in reality, nothing more than a form of graceful indulgence of those sensibilities which the habits of a disciplined life restrain in other directions. Such art is, in a word, the opera and drama of the monk. Sometimes it is worse than this, and the love of it is the mask under which a general thirst for morbid excitement will pass itself for religion."

Take the sin of *impurity*—what can æstheticism do in arresting that? It can do nothing. Polished gentlemen can be coarse sensualists. If Christianity had brought nothing more to the corrupt race of man than the blessing of purity, its value would be infinite. The reigning licentiousness is outside of the Christian kingdom. Every pagan nation might welcome the religion of Christ because of its sanctifying power. Refinement and lewdness were mingled together among the Greeks and Romans when Christianity appeared. "The lives of men of every class, from the highest to the lowest, were consumed in the practice of the most abominable and flagitious vices: even crimes, the horrible turpitude of which was

such that it would be defiling the ear of decency but to name them, were openly perpetrated with the greatest impunity." *

Even when we come to *divine art*, the art of God which has no imperfection, does that change the character of man at its base? Are the people who live by the Rhine and under the clear skies of the Orient, all pure and peaceful? There are flowers and birds of gay plumage and golden sunsets and heavenly landscapes, yet the men who live in the presence of these are not heavenly. Even cannibals live upon islands that seem like the islands of the blest, with no transforming power reaching them through all the centuries of their history. *Æsthetic* agencies viewed as secondary are good in their place; but to reckon upon them as having power to charm sin out of the soul, is a vain and fruitless expectation. Not even a sight of the land of God will make a man godly.

Free government is now recommended as the power that will set all things right. The evils that affect society are supposed to be governmental evils. The organic system must therefore be remodeled. Just what is wanted is not always clear to the minds of those who

* Mosheim, "Commentaries on the Affairs of Christians before the Time of Constantine," vol. i., p. 26.

would revolutionize the existing state of things. They only know that they want to live in an easier way. The distinctions of rich and poor they do not believe in. The entire political system ought to be so shaped and managed that every man will have an abundance, and so will be contented and happy. A government that is simple, free, and for all alike, will do away with the evils that afflict mankind. While some would utterly destroy law, government, and God, leaving nothing but a rampant individualism, the more moderate adopt the above plan.

This view, like most of the views of men, has a degree of truth in it. No doubt a free government, instead of one that is oppressive, would be a good thing, just as universal education and æstheticism would be good things. But to suppose that a free government will give us a republic of truth, goodness, and happiness, is nothing but a dream. It may be easier to live, and one may have more advantages under one kind of government than under another, but as to expelling sin and introducing holiness, no government can do that. Apart from all organic systems, the human soul is astray; and any process of outward machinery, however complete, will never restore man to his God. The despotism of

human nature is the chief despotism. He only is free who is made such by Christ.

The idea seems to float in certain minds that good circumstances will make a man good. The thing cannot be done. We see persons under the best circumstances who are still vicious and miserable, and then again we see persons under the worst circumstances who are good and happy. It is the heart that makes the man, the conscience that makes the man, the will that makes that man; and if the heart, conscience, and will are right, why, the man will be right anywhere; but if they are wrong, he will be wrong anywhere. Place a wise and good man under a despotism, and he will be a wise and good man still; and place a villain under the best government upon earth, and he will be a villain still.

It is certainly desirable to have a good government, quite desirable to have all the circumstances of our being as perfect as possible, yet let every man know that even if these ends were realized, man would still be selfish; he would still need a Divine Saviour. It is not, then, the gospel of human freedom that is going to restore the lost paradise; the Gospel of Christ can alone do that. The grand thought of the Christian redemption is that it is designed to leaven the whole mass of society;

touching souls, families, communities, and nations; reforming laws and institutions; extending more and more a new divine atmosphere; more and more a new divine life. This method makes no show. It simply moves on like the silent steps of God. But like God it conquers.

The *moral law* is next viewed as the royal way to perfection. We admit that a species of moral excellence can be gained by the discipline of law. But it must be distinctly understood that a merely moral character lacks the tone of a character that is holy. There is a great difference between an act that springs from the natural conscience, and an act that springs from the regenerate heart. Love is found in the latter, but not in the former. The best we can say is simply this, that the moral man tries to do right at the very time he has a fixed preference for sin. The soul is divided against itself, and so the morality does not possess pure singleness. The highest degree of moral development fails to start life in a dead nature. It is far from true that virtue is the angel that moves the waters, so that whosoever enters in after that is healed of whatsoever disease he had. Law is simply a rule of holy action, and has no power to enable a man to perform the action that is re-

quired. A command can neither destroy the love of wickedness, nor generate the love of goodness.

Suppose, however, a man does believe that he can worry sin to death and can become perfect in holiness. He may adopt the following method. He makes a fixed purpose in the morning that he will not cherish a wrong feeling nor perform a wrong act throughout the day. Does he succeed? No. He repeats the same effort day after day for a week. How does he come out? The whole is a complete failure. Perhaps a pretended friend has plundered his wealth and blackened his character. Does he heartily forgive him? He finds he cannot do that. He tries, however, to swing round the mind by the aid of the best motive. He says, I will do right just because it is right. Does he now love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself? Far from it. Not willing to be defeated, he fastens his eye on the Perfect Man and tries hard and long to be like him. He leaves the bright vision in a state of imperfection, feeling that he seems worse than he was before.

The fact is, when the claims of the law are pressed upon the soul the depraved nature is aroused, instead of mastered, and the man

discovers that "when he would do good, evil is present with him." So long as a human being is not troubled by conscience the depraved nature sleeps. In that state of sleep the person can easily imagine that he is good instead of bad. The ministry of the ten commandments is simply a ministry of condemnation. The more one beholds their breadth and spirituality the more he beholds his wickedness. Instead of being nerved to holy action by them, there is a touch of despair, and he sadly exclaims, "How to perform that which is good I find not." Many passages from heathen writers illustrate this kind of experience. Ovid says, "If I could, I would be more sane. But some unknown force drags me against my will. Desire draws me one way, conviction another. I see the better and approve, the worse I follow." Seneca says, "Our corrupt nature has drunk in such deep draughts of iniquity, which are so far incorporated in its very bowels, that you cannot remove it, save by tearing them out. No man is able to clear himself; let some one give him a hand, let some one lead him out."

The conclusion we reach is this, that unless a *supernatural influence* is brought to bear upon the fallen soul, it is doomed. The chief want of that soul is *spiritual power*. Every

human being possesses a great amount of power of a certain kind. The collective works of unregenerate man show that power. Mind from its nature is power. Not a single faculty of the mind has been lost by sin. The chief difficulty, however, with the faculties is, that they are set wrong by sin. They cannot act in a proper way with reference to divine things because sin is a state of mind. There is spiritual incapacity and an unconverted habit. The supreme preference is set upon secondary objects, and not upon the Supreme Object. Being thus conditioned by one's own love and choice, and not by any forced necessity, there is no such thing as change by self-power. No man can make the darkened mind to see God, the depraved heart to love God, the unwilling will to obey God. A soul that is self-centred cannot regenerate itself. If man is to escape from evil, help must come from *without*. There is hope and help. "The *gospel* is the *power* of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Supernatural influence is the one thing which distinguishes the religion of God from the religions of men. In the Incarnate Saviour is a fund of remedial power, and this is communicated to souls by the Divine Spirit. The supernatural works in various ways. It enlightens the mind and makes it

receptive. It convinces and restrains, cheers and strengthens, is a holy quality and a life from God. There is grace before conversion, grace in conversion, and grace after conversion.

CHAPTER IV.

CERTITUDE OF THAT RELIGION WHICH SPRINGS FROM THE GREAT SALVATION.

I do not refer here to religion viewed as a system, but to religion viewed as a life, and that life as coming from the great Life-giver, the divine-human Saviour. This religion must speak for itself without any labored argument. Having seen what it is, we can judge accordingly. Our demands with reference to religion must not be too high, as man is a fallen being. Time and training are necessary. The ideal will not be realized at once. The great point is whether the principles of Christianity meet the sinful state of human nature. As everything can be counterfeited in this life, we have counterfeit Christians. It is not fair to take such as samples of the religion of Christ. Let us look at the reality, and let us be impartial when once we see it.

We shall present the elements of religion, and it will be seen that if man is ever to become a holy being these elements must remain just as they are.

1. There is a *feeling of need*. Although this feeling is antecedent to religion, and in certain circumstances may never lead to it, yet whenever religion begins, the feeling of need is there. Let indifference prevail, and the soul is lost. The worldly cannot be spiritual. Satisfaction with selfishness is dissatisfaction with God. The sense of need shows that things are beginning to be seen as they are. The one-sided life is breaking up. The highest thoughts are entering the mind and impressing it. There is a sense of danger, a thirst to be quenched, a want to be filled, a feeling of weakness and a desire for help. There is weariness and unrest, and a kind of experience that cannot very well be expressed. All the faculties of the mind are at work: the intellect is facing stern facts, the memory is looking over the dark past, the conscience is eyeing the troubled future, the heart is ruffled with varied emotions, the apostate will is struggling with its chain. The man looks towards salvation—wants it—prays. Even the body is affected by the ministry of need, and sleepless hours betoken its presence. No thoughtful person can affirm that the above experience is unsuitable. As a preparatory means it is just what is wanted.

2. *Repentance*. This implies a fundamental

change of character. Sin is admitted, felt, and condemned. It is hated because it is hateful, and not merely because of the evil that flows from it. Sin as a whole is hated. If select sins are loved, how can the bad ever become good? Grief now arises because we have sinned and because of the inward depravity which clings to the soul. The grief implies that we have a wish that the sin had not been, and that we would make amends for it if we could; yet deeply conscious that we never can blot it out. The penitent kneels at the foot of the cross, and the blood of the Saviour drops down upon him and washes away his sin. The tear in the eye is not only expressive of sorrow for the past, but of hope for the future: the night ends in the day. The penitent man therefore turns from sin, having a fixed determination to live for holiness, looking to God for pardon and strength. The important feature here is, that we have “repentance towards *God*,” and not merely confession or restitution made to man. We view the Supreme Being as the Head of a moral government and Judge of all accountable creatures, and that he cannot pardon unless we repent. The stern reality stands out—*repentance or perdition*. To suppose that a God of holiness would remit punishment while we have a fixed

preference for sin, would be to offer a universal license to evil, annihilating God and his kingdom at the same time. Thus it is evident upon principles of right and reason that no man can attain to righteousness unless he repents.

3. *Faith*. This is one of the most expressive characteristics of the Christian religion, and it does not appear that there is any other act of the mind that can take its place. Feeling that we are absolutely lost, we depend absolutely upon the Redeemer. Our surrender to him is unconditional; it is for time and eternity. Faith is complex in its nature, and is the outcome of the leading faculties of the soul. The intellect assents to the truth of a divine redemption, the heart goes out in penitence to the Redeemer, and the will trusts in him as the only way to be saved. Faith has every requisite as a condition. By it we are justified, and thus have the law on our side; by it we are united to God, and thus are perfectly safe. There is no virtue but that is touched by its power, and no truth of the mind that does not feel its influence. It works many a time when we know it not, and is so blessed as never to cast a shadow upon the soul. As a source of inspiration it is like the air of heaven, and as a principle of action it never can die. To be

without faith is to be without God. Unbelief shuts the door of mercy, and faith opens it and leads the soul into the presence of the King.

4. *Love.* Christianity is the religion of the burning heart. Faith is rooted and grounded in love. These two graces appear at the same time: they are Siamese twins. Love as a governing power does not exist in the natural heart of man. When the soul left God the spiritual tie was sundered, and ever since that time he has been living a mere human life. Feelings suited to earthly relationships are at work, but the master passion is not there. When man went out of Eden with a sigh he brought flowers with him: they still grow in the garden of the soul. Hence we behold parental affection, brotherly and sisterly love, the tear of sympathy, eagerness to help men in peril, benevolence extended to those in want, and gratitude because of it, friendship that binds kindred spirits, and patriotism that does not end in glory. These are all beautiful; but better and more beautiful they would be if divine love was among them. Love is the heart of religion, and religion is the heart of love. "I love," says Mrs. Isabella Graham, "to feel the kindlings of repentance, self-loathing under a sense of ingratitude, heart-melting

with the view of pardoning grace. I love to feel the sprinkling of my Redeemer's blood on my conscience, drawing forth the tears of joy and gratitude in the view of free pardon. I love to dwell on the seal of reconciliation, while my heart, glowing with gratitude, sinks into the arms of my redeeming Lord, in full confidence of his love and my safety forever. I love to feel longings after closer communion, after more conformity to his image, more usefulness to my fellow-members of the body of Christ, and to all his creatures. I love to feel deeply interested in the success of the Gospel, in the declarative glory of Jehovah, as manifested in his works of creation and providence, but chiefly in the superexcellent work of redemption." *

The love of Christianity takes its type from the love of Christ. It is the love of self-sacrifice. It is redemptive in its mission, godlike in its quality, and a distinctively new power in the world of man. As a controlling element in the development of character, there is none like it. It can be brought to bear upon every evil habit and upon every virtue of the soul. There is no principle that has such a universality of influence as love. "God is love." Law is love. Salvation is love. Religion is love. One does

* "Life," p. 142.

not need a thousand commands in order to perform a thousand duties; the one command of love is sufficient. If there were not a single statute, court, or prison in the land, the good man would be good by the simple supremacy of a pure affection. There is no instrument with which to work in well-doing that is so easy and pleasant to handle as love. Let the soul have the love of complacency and goodwill, and it may go anywhere and do anything. Love sparkles all through the New Testament. It shines like a sun in the Fourth Gospel, and no gem of pagan literature can equal the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. When Love died on the cross the climax was reached.

5. *Obedience.* The experience that has been stated thus far, constitutes a new form of life. There is a new drift to the soul and a new ultimate end. The *tone* or *spirit* of the life may be called Christly and godly, because it springs from Christ and goes out to God. Let any man examine the experience of Paul *after* his conversion and his experience *before* it, and the one will be seen to be as different from the other as the light is from darkness. Compare the "Confessions" of Augustine with the "Confessions" of Rousseau, and you notice that the atmosphere which surrounds the one is that of purity, while the atmosphere that

surrounds the other is utterly corrupt. Let a veritable Christian and a moralist sit down and attempt to converse with each other on the searching and spiritual phases of a religious life, and it will be seen at once that the moral man does not feel at ease in facing such matters. There is in fact no affinity between the two persons. The habitude of the soul in each is different.

Just notice the experience of President Edwards as described by himself. He says: "There came into my soul, and as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from anything I ever experienced before. I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him. An inward sweetness of these things came into my mind; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. And my mind was greatly engaged to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, on the beauty and excellency of his person, and the lovely way of salvation by free grace in him. The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be a calm sweet cast or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything. God's excellency, his wisdom, his pu-

urity and love, seemed to appear in everything; in the sun, and moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, and trees; in the water, and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness, wherewith my heart seemed to be full. Prayer seemed to be natural to me, as the breath by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent.”* Now, considering that Edwards had a highly cultivated mind, we may receive his experience as that of a true man.

When the life unfolds itself in obedience to God during a course of years and under all circumstances, it presents testimony in favor of religion which the most sceptical are compelled to admire. Christian principle acted out in the forms of strict justice, truthfulness, and benevolence, commends itself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. The examples of Schwartz the missionary and Howard the philanthropist will never fade from the memories of men. The life that is an imitation of Christ is life indeed. There is both pathos and power in the words of Jesus —“If ye love me, *ye will* keep my commandments.” (New Version.) If the love is certain, the obedience will be certain. The amount of

* “Life of Edwards,” prefixed to his Works, pp. 16, 17.

our self-denial in the service of Christ shows the amount of our love. Our death for him is life.

Such are the constituent elements of the religion of Christ. There must be a feeling of need if man is to escape from himself. Character cannot be changed from evil to good unless one repents. The Saviour cannot help me if I do not believe in him. The claims of God never can be met unless I love. A life of obedience is the good fruit which springs from the good tree, and is its own evidence. No one can say that there is anything arbitrary about these requirements. If a man were told to leap from a precipice in order to become holy, the means would not be adapted to the end. The method of God fits precisely the case of the fallen soul. It is adapted to the old and the young, the ignorant and the educated, the greatest sinner and the least. It applies to universal man in all the circumstances of his being. As sin never loses its quality by reason of any refinements of civilization, so the method of cure never changes. In all the developments of the future there will not appear any new Christ nor any new Christianity.

The religion of Christ as to its *essence* is as old as the creation. The Bible reveals differ-

ent dispensations, rites, and ceremonies; there were degrees of light and degrees of progress because of it; but in all the changes the elements of religion cannot change. The Old Testament saints felt their need, repented, believed, loved, and obeyed, just like the saints of the New Testament. In whatever country, at whatever time, any man has these characteristics he will be saved. The religion of God is *one*. There cannot be two religions, just as there cannot be two kinds of straight lines or two kinds of circles. The fact is, there is but one religion for the entire universe. Let the *remedial* features of the Christian religion be stripped off, as they will be in time, then we have pure hatred of sin and trust in God, pure love and obedience to all his requirements. The unfallen angels and the saints who have been rescued from sin keep the same law and worship the same God forever.

This religion is no fancy or speculation; it is a fact in the conscious experience of millions of men. If consciousness can be appealed to as a true witness of that which is passing in the mind, then it can be appealed to as a true witness of piety in the heart. Here are a multitude of people who affirm that their disposition to evil has been changed, so that they now love that which they once hated, and hate

that which they once loved. Why should we not believe these persons? Thousands of them have well-balanced minds. Are they all deluded? Yea, are all the pious men from the beginning to the present time deceived in regard to their religious thoughts, emotions, and purposes? They tell us that their religion brought peace and joy to their souls, such as they never had before, and that not even the most tormenting death could tempt them to forsake their God and Saviour; must all this evidence go for nothing, simply because a few sceptics say it is nothing? That will not answer; that would not be reasonable. Truth cannot be made error, right cannot be made wrong, by any mere say so. We are perfectly willing to admit that persons have been deceived, just as persons have been deceived about every great matter, but to affirm that the whole sum of godliness in the world is nothing, is in fact sheer delusion and hypocrisy—that kind of unbelief really kills itself, and is an utter shame to any man who has it.

Let us suppose that every human being has truly adopted the religion of the Son of God, and that that religion is acted out in the way the Master intended. What a blessed state of things would be the result! Love is manifested in all the spheres of life. There is no

injustice between man and man. Every word spoken is true. Crimes are not known anywhere. Court-houses and prisons belong to the past. In no dwelling is found a lock and a key: there is none to molest or to make afraid. There are no wars: peace reigns. There are no slanders and contentions, no jealousies and envies. Wherever you go you meet a friend. Love sparkles in every eye and glows in every countenance. Holiness is written upon every instrument that is plied by the busy hand of man. All the arts and sciences and civilizations are carried forward in love. Education is marked with righteousness. No book is ever printed that is injurious to old or young. The whole world of literature and the whole world of mind are in a state of health. The very sky seems lovelier than before; the mountains have about them a serene majesty; the rivers may be called the rivers of God; the birds sing with a sweeter song; the infant plays with the asp; there is nothing to hurt or destroy. Can principles that work out in this way be bad? Can the Christian religion be false when this earth would be heaven if it were acted out? The argument speaks for itself to every fair-minded man.

Thus Christianity solves the problem of life; that problem which has puzzled all minds.

The philosophy of history is seen in the fact, that "God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." There is a great kingdom of redemption. It centres in the God-man. The kingdom is co-extensive with human time. All regenerate souls are subjects of it. Progress is neither straight forward nor straight upward, but antithetic and spiral. Deliverance from sin and misery is the end. History is redemptive. Let redemption be removed, and the world is without meaning. We are living in the midst of a redemptive system, and know not what it has done for us. Notice a few of its favors.

When Christ appeared the world was almost given over to idolatry; the Jews and a few others being the exception. But to-day Europe, America, and parts of Asia and Africa, have the doctrine of *one God*. The gain in this particular is infinite. Mark also the millions who possess the *Bible*. It is translated into the chief languages of mankind. The entire world will soon possess it. The influence of this one Book of the one God cannot be measured. The *Sabbath* is another blessing of salvation. It lays an arrest on human selfishness, turns the attention of the soul towards God, makes one to think of eternity, tests character, and is a powerful means

of sustaining the Christian religion. *Immortality* has also come to us as a *fact*, and in connection with it the *resurrection of the dead*; thus teaching us that man in his duplex nature is to exist forever. Still further, we should realize that the redemptive economy has been lifting up individuals and nations upon a higher plane of *moral life* than is common to people in heathen lands. Let one live for a generation, not among savages, but in China or India, and he will see the vast difference that there is between pagan life and Christian life. We should be impressed also with the fact that the Christian view of the *great system of things* is just the opposite of the sceptical view. We behold a Divine Being and a divine creation, a divine law and a divine government, a Divine Ruler and a Divine Judge, a divine incarnation, and a divine redemption. The ultimate end of the great system of things is the glory of God. Nothing could be higher and better than this.

If Christianity now is false, then we are in the midst of darkness and despair. But it is not false. The grandest movement in history is the religion of God. That it has moved along slowly is true, but this is because *sin* is such a fearful evil. The mystery of sin and the mystery of the will go together, and no

man thus far has sounded the depths of the one or the depths of the other. Christianity is for all, but all do not want it. The blame is not with Christianity, but with those who reject it. Even the imperfect nature of good men is no argument against salvation. There is power enough in salvation to make every man holy, but the unwilling will stands in the way. Religion, however, is spreading. The nations that wield the greatest power at present are the Christian nations. England and America, with others following, are sending the Gospel into all lands. The English-speaking people, to all appearance, are to be the leaders of the future. The time will not be long before more persons will speak the English language than will speak any other. English will be the language of trade and commerce, of law and government, of science and civilization, of philosophy and religion. As Christianity has travelled from East to West, the United States has a historic position of great responsibility. Persons are living who will see a population here of two hundred millions. With business and freedom consecrated to God the world can be conquered. The present is the age of preparation : the future is the age of triumph. To live in this day is an inspiration.

CHAPTER V.

GREAT INDIGNATION.

ALL actions, whether right or wrong, should awaken in us feelings that are suitable to them. Indifference in regard to good and evil is moral death. There are holy actions that should kindle in us admiration, love, and thankfulness; and there are sinful actions that should start grief, hatred, and indignation. The feeling of indignation is of great value as a constituent of character. It gives tone and power to character for which nothing else can be substituted. Its very sternness braces up the soul even as a cold day braces up the body. The difference between a man with righteous indignation and a man without it, is just like the difference of two human constitutions, the one of which is affected by the temperate zone and the other by the torrid. The man who lives near the equator will be enfeebled by the enfeebling nature of the climate, while he who lives in the north is trained by a vigorous climate to a vigorous life.

Indignation is neither high temper nor revenge. The quality of spite or malice is not in it. Pure indignation is hatred of wrong as wrong, and it springs forth from a sound conscience and a sound heart. There is in the feeling a judicial element. It is felt that the transgressor of law should suffer.

In Scripture we have the sentence, "Be ye angry, and sin not." It is implied in this that there is an anger which may be exercised without sin. Suppose a man desires to gain your vote and influence by offering you a bribe, should you not frown upon that man with strong marks of indignation? Suppose also that an individual is making efforts to lead your daughter into a life of impurity, would not a flame of holy wrath flash forth against such a man? Certainly one can be angry, and yet not sin. Not to be angry in such cases would itself be sin. Those that love the Lord are commanded to "*hate evil*." No compromise is to be made with evil; it is not to be softened, not to be excused, but hated.

Behold the indignation of God. See how he swept away the entire ancient world with a flood, with the exception of eight persons; how he rained down fire and brimstone upon the guilty cities of the plain; how he drowned

the host of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. The Bible has many passages relating to the wrath of God. We read of his "fierce anger," that he is "a consuming fire," and that he "will by no means clear the guilty." The moral indignation of God startles us in the midst of our indifference. It is because his purity is so pure, his love so transcendent, that his entire nature rises against sin. "The God of the selfish heart is the deity of sentimentalism; the God of the imagination and the taste is the beautiful Grecian Apollo; the God of the understanding merely is the cold and unemotional abstraction of the deist and the pantheist; but the God of the conscience is the living and holy God of Israel,—the God of punishments and atonements."*

See the indignation of the prophets. They guarded the sanctuary of truth with greater faithfulness than the priests. A holy fire bursts forth from their soul in the presence of impiety. Moses beholding the worshippers of the golden calf is so excited with indignation that he casts the tables of stone out of his hands and breaks them. Elijah aroused by the manifestations of God and the movements of the prophets of Baal orders them to be slain. Isaiah witnessing the prevailing wickedness,

* Shedd, in *Biblioth. Sacra*, vol. xvi., p. 730.

exclaims, "How is the faithful city become a harlot! Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves." Jeremiah driven to a kind of desperation, says, "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a *man*." A real man could not be found. The thoughts of the minor prophets flame out as a fire at midnight. "The Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways, they shall seem like torches, they shall run like lightnings."

Consider the indignation of the imprecatory psalms. "In the palace of God's truth these psalms hang like a sword upon the wall: in times of peace we make idle criticisms upon its workmanship and idle theories as to its use; sound the trumpet of danger, and we instantly grasp it—it is all that we have between us and death. In the day of prosperity these psalms seem useless, in the darkness of affliction they are luminous; as a piece of fireworks has no prominence in the day-time, but it is the splendor and illumination of the night. There are times when the Christian is not to blame for having the spirit of these psalms. Resentment becomes the holiest of instincts

when it resents the proper object. With wonderful wisdom the Bible provides, not only for man's present, but for his future emergencies, as the earth is stored with mine after mine which successive ages shall open. These psalms have a 'springing and germinant fulfilment'; every throe and struggle of humanity comments upon them, and each generation of mankind penetrates further into their meaning. Think not that any truth is useless; the rolling wheel of time shall at length come upon it." *

Mark the indignation of Christ. That he was meek, gentle, and of the utmost tenderness, is evident; and yet how he comes with a crash upon certain of the wicked of his time. "Ye serpents, generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell." He tells the Scribes and Pharisees that they were "hypocrites," that they "devoured the houses of widows," and that they made their disciples "twofold more the children of hell than themselves." We are told that on a certain occasion Christ looked round upon his audience "with anger, being grieved because of the hardness of their hearts." Grief and wrath moved him. This will be the way with every nature that is Christlike. When the wicked will not

* Smith, Bible Dict., vol. iii., p. 2628. American ed.

yield mercy retires, and justice strikes the blow.

There are states of mind which *impede* the working of pure indignation. The *excessive love of quietness* is one of these states. There are persons who want peace at whatever expense it may be bought. They seem to think that whatever terminates in peace must be good, and whatever terminates in commotion must be bad. They forget the statement of Christ: "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword." In a world where we have the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, there must be conflict. To extract the energy out of indignation by the intense craving for quietness, is to make the soul incapable of great moral action. Hatred of wrong and love of right press a man ahead, that he may lessen the one and extend the other. The heroic element is kept alive by moral indignation. Conflict in itself is not pleasing, but it is necessary. To shun the troubles that are incident to the march of righteousness for the sake of peace, is to cast contempt on him who bought us with his own precious blood. Spurious peace is nothing but selfishness. To testify against evil is not to its liking; to rebuke the transgressor is deemed unwise.

A *mistaken idea of love* is also a hindrance to

the working of pure indignation. Love has been eulogized to such an extent for a number of years that it has lost its identity to a certain class of minds. It has been resolved into a kind of indiscriminate good nature; and the result is, that the wicked are much pleased with such a friendly power that can shelter them. Principles of forgiveness which Christ gave for the regulation of private life have been applied to public life; thus losing sight of law and government, justice and punishment. Carry out such love to its natural results, and it would sweep away every vestige of authority from the nation and the world.

Still further, the *fear of man* impedes the working of indignation. Let a person be influenced by this motive, and he is afraid to take a stand against evils that are around him. If sin is spoken against, it is done in a general way. The good-will of certain individuals must not be lost. Everything is trimmed and turned in view of what persons will think, and feel, and say. Manliness is thus taken out of the soul, and moral courage departs. Fear of offending a holy God, drops down into fear of offending a sinful man. Love of truth for truth's sake is crippled. There can be nothing of the prophetic fire in the soul when one is controlled by mere human opinion. To

have proper feelings touching sin and holiness, the soul must be allowed to work in the midst of pure moral forces. Outside pressure must be shut out, and forgetting the frowns and favors of men the God-directed spirit must travel along the even line of goodness, determined to do right whatever may happen.

Let us mark off now *certain persons* against whom moral indignation should especially be directed. The fraudulent and dishonest men in common business, the speculating and plundering officials who stand at the head of moneyed institutions, those who enrich themselves by publishing sensational novels and obscene papers, should be made to tremble by a sharp blast of indignation. Think of bad men in public life. Their influence is more extended because of their public position, and so our indignation must be proportioned to that influence. Instead of being shielded by their rank in society, that very fact ought to render their wickedness doubly abhorrent. Suppose that the men connected with the judicial affairs of the nation are turning aside the principles of justice, should not the moral sense of the people rise up against them, and they be hurled from their place? The system of law in a community lies at the very foundation of human welfare. When that is weak-

ened, all is weakened. The cause of the friendless finds no defender, and the daring criminal no punisher. The finest and purest minds are needed in the practice of law. The judge and the advocate should be men whose only opinion is the expression of right, and whose only business is to see that all have their due. Arguments based on sophistry should not venture to draw near to this sacred shrine. A false plea shaped with great art for so much pay is an abomination. There are evils here and there that ought to stir the public conscience and awaken the public indignation. "JUDGE RIGHTEOUSLY" should be printed in golden capitals on the walls of every courtroom in the land.

When the men who represent the people in the state or national legislature are seen to inculcate false principles, and when the love of money and the love of power express the leading drift of their minds, they should awaken strong indignation. The man who rules in the fear of God is to be honored, while the scheming and self-seeking person is to be contemned. If the highest office in the land is filled by one who sets at defiance human and divine law, the moral wrath of the entire nation should burst forth against such wickedness. Let any one read the life of Henry the

Eighth of England, and he will see the fearful length to which a ruler can go in sin. If the “violence, cruelty, profusion, rapacity, injustice, obstinacy, arrogance, bigotry, and presumption,” of that prince, do not excite the soul to a high pitch of indignation, that soul must be twice dead. It is the remark of Sir James Mackintosh that “Henry, perhaps, approached as nearly to the ideal standard of perfect wickedness, as the infirmities of human nature would allow.”

There is a class of men who it might be supposed could never be the objects of indignation—I mean religious teachers—and yet the chief errors of the Christian Church have sprung from these persons. If there be any order of men who need to be watched and tested more than others by the light of the Bible, it is those who teach in our schools of theology and those who minister in our churches. If they venture to depart from the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, a just indignation should overwhelm them. Better, a thousand times better, that a minister of God should seem a little too stringent, than that he should give way to laxness in religion. Indeed, unless I am greatly mistaken, it is absolutely necessary that he should be doubly stringent in order that he may the better force back the tide of

evil that is seeking evermore to destroy the Church and salvation. Unless a minister has great love of truth, great fixedness of principle, and a divine courage, he will be tempted to sink down to the level of a worldly membership, till finally, instead of being a leader of the Lord's host, that host leads him. We are never to forget that when religion is corrupted it is like the corrupting of the world's atmosphere, bringing speedy death to the inhabitants of that world. It is like poisoning the rivers and fountains of water, like striking out the sun from the heavens, leaving the earth a desert of darkness.

The *gambling fraternity* should arouse our indignation. "History is replete with evidences that wherever gambling in any form is tolerated, bribery and corruption protect it, while the rights of law-abiding citizens are subverted, industrious habits are destroyed, common honesty undermined, and honest business enterprises are honey-combed, through employés rendered dishonest by these glittering allurements to crime. During the year 1890, one hundred and twenty-eight persons were either shot or stabbed over gambling games; six attempted suicide and twenty-four persons committed suicide, while sixty were murdered in cold blood and others were driven

insane. *Sixty-eight youths and persons were ruined by pool gambling and betting upon horse-races.* Among the crimes committed to get money to gamble with were two burglaries, eighteen forgeries, eighty-five embezzlements; while thirty-two persons holding positions of trust in banks and other places of responsibility, absconded. The proceeds of these embezzlements, defalcations, and crimes, amounted to \$2,898,372."

Still again, when we see *liquor* holding high revelry, minding neither tears nor entreaties, blasting the hopes of hearts and homes, ruining sons and fathers by the deadly drink, should not our indignation be felt in some positive way against such offenders? The liquor interest is becoming more and more a frightful despotism. Men are struck dead because they rise up against this tyrannic system. Liberty and righteousness must be trampled under foot in order that this banded scheme of immorality may have its own way. It is not "rule or ruin," but *rule and* ruin. There needs to be a heated burst of eternal righteousness, a punitive stroke that will tell upon guilty souls. Softness and palaver, expediency and diplomatic piety, will not answer for these times of lawlessness. We want a steady gale of judicial thought and

action, making the evils at work to fall and die. We want more of the close-knit theology of conscience, and less of the theology of mere pleasing and ornamentation. A holy war is now upon us, and we must fight. The martyr spirit must grasp us, and the martyr life must animate us.

Moral indignation is at the bottom of all great reforms. It is this that gives force to the soul, and makes men to strike down evils that have stood for years and ages. An indignant people have arrested the corruption of great cities, have gained national rights, have put an end to slavery, and have proclaimed the brotherhood of man. Indignation in view of great evils started the Reformation of the sixteenth century. It was not merely a corrupt faith that excited the people, not merely that noble men were burned at the stake, but it was the greed, profanity, ambition, and lust of the priesthood which aroused them; and so they forsook the Romish system, and went back to the pure religion of the New Testament. Indeed, it is a question whether any of the great awakenings in the Church have ever taken place apart from indignation against sin. The revivals of religion among the Jews of Old Testament times were certainly struck upon that key, and those that occurred under

John the Baptist, Christ, and the apostles were of the same character. The fact is, our relish for holiness will always be in proportion to our abhorrence of sin. There are few things that will so urge a man on to the performance of difficult duties as a divine indignation, just because love is there in its intense form.

There is goodness at present, and even more of it than ever before, but the goodness is not sufficiently forceful. Our family life has lost the vigor of authority, and so a request has taken the place of a command. A sickly feeling has also grown up in relation to criminals. By reason of a mawkish tenderness they do not receive the due reward of their deeds. This sentiment has connected itself with divine punishment, and so the tendency is to weaken that. There is certainly needed all over the land a healthy indignation that will check evil and cheer the good. A reign of puritanism would be life.

CHAPTER VI.

GREAT PRINCIPLES.

WHILE the Bible is a book containing great truths and great facts, it is also a book containing great principles. These principles are sometimes stated in plain words, and sometimes they are left to be inferred from the thought itself. As Biblical principles are numerous, we simply call attention to a few.

I. THE HABITUAL PRACTICE OF ONE KNOWN SIN MAKES HOLINESS IMPOSSIBLE.

This is a principle which tests our character. The one sin which is committed day by day and approved day by day reveals the moral state of a man just as truly as a hundred sins could do it. By this short and easy method any person can discover whether he is really good or bad in his heart; and yet it is a difficult thing to get one to submit to a test of this kind. The principle seems to be too sweeping; and there is also a fear that if it is true, our character will be found wanting. So

by a touch of self-righteousness, the principle is doubted. The mind fastens upon a number of acts that have been always thought to be good, and how can one habitual sin destroy these good acts? Let us examine the matter.

Suppose that a stranger has come to live in our village. He seems to be a man of wealth and intelligence. Although he does not press himself into notice, he is ready to help in all public improvements and is in favor of the great reforms of the day. He is a person of fine manners, impresses one as a real gentleman, is kind to the poor, and attentive to the sick. He sustains an exemplary character for months and years, is honored by the whole population, and is consulted in all intricate cases because of his superior judgment. It comes out, however, that this distinguished man is the chief of a band of counterfeiters, and that all his money has been made in that way. The scales now are turned. The one act of counterfeiting shows that the goodness was merely a show. The great man is tried, condemned, and sent to prison as a criminal.

Take a different case from the common walks of life. Here is a young man who becomes a clerk in a store. He manifests unusual skill

in the business he has adopted. He is a favorite not only with his employer, but with all the customers. The moral habits of the young man are excellent. He is chaste, truthful, and temperate; has joined the Young Men's Christian Association, and has become a teacher in the Sabbath school. He has lately united with the Church, and it is prophesied that he will be a noted man in the community. In fact he is held up to the youth of the place as a model. But it has been discovered that the fair young man is a *thief*. He has been purloining money ever since he has been in the store. What now is the verdict? The verdict is, that he is a hypocrite. The one habitual sin showed that the goodness had no foundation.

Illustrations of the point might be multiplied, but they are not needed. If we set apart any one sin for our special use, and justify ourselves when we commit it, we are clean gone at the base of our being. The governing power is evil; and the terrible thing is, that the evil is made good. A converted man may sin because of temptation, but he does not approve the sin; he condemns himself for committing it, repents and prays to God to forgive him. A sin in such circumstances is different from habitual falsehood, profanity,

licentiousness, and forgetfulness of God. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

II. MORAL ACTION MUST BEGIN WITH GOD.

It is a significant thought that the ten commandments begin with God. They are a revelation of his will for the guidance of man. The ten words are ten links of a golden chain. The first link is fastened to a God of holiness, and the last link to a man who desires to be holy; thus teaching us that law has no meaning unless it centres in a divine affection. Law must first be religious before it can be moral, and religion must first be theological before it can have the quality of godliness. The moral law is the expression of God's infinite purity; a purity that neither antedates the divine will nor follows it; but which constitutes the very essence of that will, and gives character to every divine attribute; so that even the natural perfections of immutability and omnipotence have the stamp of goodness. If I am to serve God, I must know him; know him as "a Spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." If I form a god after my own fancy, I am an idolator. That which man loves the most is his god. Then,

too, we always become like the object of our affection. If our deity is bad we become bad: if our deity is good we become good. The various religions can be tested by this thought. The stream will not rise higher than its source. "All people will walk every one in the name of his god."

The spirituality of the moral law is not seen in human systems. Confucius has done much for China by his ethical teachings; but he has failed in the chief thing, because the Divine was left out of them. Buddhism is extolled by men opposed to Christianity, and yet God is the infinite want of that scheme of life. It has these ten commandments: "Do not kill; do not steal; do not commit adultery; do not lie; do not become intoxicated; do not visit dances, singing, or theatrical representations; use no ornaments or perfumery in dress; use no luxurious beds; accept neither gold nor silver."* These commandments do not centre in the Supreme Being. As to atheism, it has no God, and as to pantheism and agnosticism, they have no personal God. Mark the logical results:—

1. If there is no personal God, there is no creation, no miracle, no prayer, no personal man.

* Clarke, "Ten Great Religions," p. 156.

2. If there is no personal man, all actions are necessitated.

3. If all actions are necessitated, there is no natural conscience.

4. If there is no natural conscience, there is no accountability.

5. If there is no accountability, there is neither sin nor holiness.

6. If there is neither sin nor holiness, there is neither merit nor demerit.

7. If there is neither merit nor demerit, there is neither reward nor punishment.

Thus men can do as they please. The flood-gates of vice are opened. Families may be plundered and butchered, but no one is to blame. The wretches may be caged or killed, just as we cage or kill wild beasts. Let such godless principles prevail, and we should be in hell. If better principles are advocated, they do not spring from scepticism, but from the God-created soul, or perchance from the very Christianity that is despised. No man has discovered a single new virtue since the Bible was completed. The pretended discoveries of that kind are either plainly stated or implied in the comprehensive ethics of the New Testament.

III. GREAT OPPOSITION, THEN GREAT SUCCESS.

We are very apt to fasten the eye on opposition itself, and then draw an unfavorable conclusion from that. The opposition, however, is only one side of the question: that which is opposed must be taken into the account. There may be invisible powers which work for righteousness that we do not reckon upon, as well as visible power which our imperfect vision only sees in part. Sometimes secondary agencies are busy that we do not think of, and sometimes the enemy is preparing means for his own defeat which he intends for another purpose. No man surveys the whole field of influence, and no man can tell what the results of that influence will be. It is only by studying the past that we strike upon a general principle that can guide us in the matter. Opposition will sometimes increase in strength for ages, as if it were in vain to think about mastering it; and yet when the favorable moment comes it breaks down. The fact is, sin has great weakness as well as great strength: in the long run holiness gains the day. The point of greatest opposition may be the point which shows that the temple of error is just about to fall. The votaries of evil are beating up an excitement because they

are in danger. The opposition is a spasm which ends in death, and the desperation is proof that goodness is victorious. Opposition is sometimes the occasion of the greatest progress. Human nature under grace needs to be stirred in order to be strong. In the darkest times the brightest men have appeared. There is a law of periodicity in the affairs of men; and that law sweeps great and small circles according to circumstances and the plan of God. Seed may be sown one day, and harvest may be the next; but that is not the usual method. National and world movements take time. We may die without seeing the end; die when opposition is fierce and hope is dim. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

Nature adumbrates what is going on in the spiritual world, while Scripture presents to us the reality. The oppression of the children of Israel in Egypt and their final deliverance, is a standing illustration of the law of opposites. Noah, Job, David, and Daniel are embodiments of the same truth. During Christ's stay upon earth opposition reached a climax, and yet success was never so complete as at the moment of his death. If the apostles had only been able to read the writing, courage and not cowardice would have possessed them. What opposition assailed the early Church; yet at

the end Paganism went under, and Christianity triumphed. In the martyrdoms of the sixteenth century, it seemed as if religion must die with its victims, and yet it lived. Deism in England tried its utmost, but at the crisis Wesley appeared; and revivals spread over the nations, and have been spreading ever since. Methodism shows how great success follows great opposition. View the history of missions in India, Burmah, China, Japan, the islands of the sea, and the dark continent, and opposition is first and success afterwards. Thus far it is through sufferings and oftentimes through death that the kingdom of Christ has been established. If through agonies the world was redeemed, through agonies it must be restored. Even in the attempt to save a single soul, enmity will make its appearance before love; the first impulse of the heart with reference to salvation is *resistance*. The oppositions of Heathenism and "the oppositions of science falsely so called," find their explanation in depravity.

IV. "HE THAT IS FAITHFUL IN THAT WHICH IS
LEAST, IS FAITHFUL ALSO IN MUCH."

Faithfulness is a principle in the soul before it becomes an act out of the soul. We have faith in the faithful man. If a merchant has

advertised for a messenger boy, and out of twenty he finds one who is faithful in all the little matters at home, at school, and at play, he selects that one, feeling that he can be trusted. It is related of Samuel Budgett that "one day he picked up a horseshoe, went with it three miles, and got a penny for it. By watching for bargains and stiffly insisting on adherence to their terms, he laid shilling to shilling, and pound to pound, until, at the age of fifteen, he was master of thirty pounds sterling." To show that he was not a mere lover of money, he gave it all to his parents. The youth was prudent and pious, and so he became a distinguished merchant and a distinguished Christian. Life is made up of little things, and the real character of a man is discovered in the way he attends to these. There does not appear to be the same opportunity for pride to connect itself with small things that there is with great. The small things stand out in their singleness, humble to look upon, with nothing about them to entice human nature; and so nothing but principle in its simplicity, and yet greatness, will be powerful enough to attend to them. He who does his best in a low position, is the man to fill one that is high. Joseph was faithful in prison before he was faithful in the palace. Ability

is not gained by a leap, but by a life. Men who carry forward great undertakings look well to particulars. Latitudinarianism is of no use in business or religion.

A ship may give way in a storm because of a bad spar. He who fails in little things fails in great things. He that will lie to gain a small advantage, will certainly lie to gain a great advantage. He who thinks it nothing to steal a penny, will soon think it nothing to steal a pound. He who cheats once will cheat twice. The man who ends at the gallows began by saying *No*. If Judas had not plundered, he might not have betrayed, and if he had not betrayed his Master, he would not have hung himself.

The great man is the man of condescension. And so we have the principle, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." He who serves in the lowest position, while he is capable of ruling in the highest, is the true nobleman. Or if the ruling is turned into a serving, that betokens the kingly mind. The Saviour was greatest when he was least. It should be noted also, that if we omit the highest duty, we fail in the lowest, because it is the highest which gives character to the lowest. If we sever the spiritual tie which binds us to the Supreme Being, we lose God

and holiness at the same time. If we attempt after that to work in the highest or lowest sphere, the working lacks tone and quality; it is formal and undivine—simply the movement of cold faculties.

V. IF I PERFORM A GOOD ACT I GAIN DOUBLE POWER, AND IF I PERFORM AN EVIL ACT I LOSE DOUBLE POWER.

The thought here stated may not be understood at once. Illustrations will make it plain. The double movement can be seen in nature. If you are sailing in a ship against a head wind, not only does the wind oppose, but the sea also that is swept by the wind. Whereas if you are sailing with a fair wind, the sea and the wind alike help the ship. Let cold air rush into a room, and at once the heated air rushes out of it. The clouds that wander through heaven, receive vapor from the earth, and yet they return that vapor back again in the form of rain. Suppose that out of love I give a thousand dollars for a benevolent object: that act strengthens the feeling of benevolence, and weakens the feeling of selfishness. If I refuse to perform that good act, then I strengthen the feeling of selfishness, and weaken the feeling of benevolence. In the one case, I take two steps upward, and in

the other, two steps downward. Suppose I go and ask the forgiveness of a man whom I have offended: that act increases the volume of good-will, and decreases the volume of ill-will. Suppose still further, that I make up my mind to break loose from the world and serve God: that determination lays an arrest on my impenitence, and gives me a power of obedience that I never had before. Let a man carry out a train of close thinking upon a great subject—the mind is invigorated and knowledge is increased.

That fine thought of Dr. Chalmers—"the expulsive power of a new affection"—fits here exactly. "The best way of casting out an impure affection is to admit a pure one; and by the love of what is good, to expel the love of what is evil. Thus it is that the freer the Gospel, the more sanctifying is the Gospel; and the more it is received as a doctrine of grace, the more will it be felt as a doctrine according to godliness. This is one of the secrets of the Christian life, that the more a man holds of God as a pensioner, the greater is the payment of service back again." It is certainly a fact also that if we act out the good impulses of the heart, we at the same time sweep away the mists of the understanding; and equally true it is that a cloudy future

will be made clear, if with a fixed determination we enter upon the path of Duty. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." The realm of truth and the realm of the future may alike confuse us, just because sin is leading us astray. On the other hand, if our mental judgment is sound, that soundness will spread a healthy influence over the affections. We may add this also, that by doing right we are happy, and by doing wrong we are miserable. In fact, both good and evil appear in clusters; sweet or bitter according to the nature of each. It is morally impossible for a sinful feeling to remain alone, and equally impossible for a holy feeling to remain alone. Deceit and falsehood, pride and sensitiveness, revenge and wrath, impenitence and unbelief, go together. Let love be kindled in the soul, and at once there is faith and hope, justice and mercy, truthfulness and self-abasement. It is by the law of affinity that character, good or bad, is formed, while the character which we possess is itself a potent law of action. It is the man that rules the man.

VI. "WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD DO TO YOU, DO YE EVEN SO TO THEM."

This is a synthetic statement of the various commands relating to man. It is short, dis-

tingent, and comprehensive, so that it can be applied to all human affairs with readiness. It springs from the heart, and is the embodiment of mercy and justice. It implies right thought, right feeling, and right action. As a beautiful principle all assent to it. Negative forms of this maxim were in existence among Jews, Greeks, and Chinamen before the time of Christ. The positive form as coming from the Divine Saviour has a fulness of meaning which does not belong to the negative. The Christian conception of sin and holiness, of law and God, of redemption and retribution, is deeper than the conception of these by men outside of Christianity; consequently we have a more profound view of the golden rule. To apply the rule properly demands wisdom and goodness. Men are usually inclined to exact more from others than they exact from themselves. We are not merely to see ourselves as others see us, but to see ourselves in the light of the perfect law. The man who tolerates in himself prejudices, errors of judgment, and omissions of duty, will not apply the rule impartially. If *he* treats others as he would like *them* to treat him, the standard will be lowered on both sides, and neither party will do right. I must hold up the ideal before the face of the soul, and must try to do to men just as I

would want them to do to me. I must not blink the great requirement, nor trim it at any point, but must honestly apply it to my life. The searching nature of the rule will not harm me, though it may alarm me. If I am pleasantly thinking that I am doing sufficiently well, the Christly maxim will chase that conceit out of the soul. It will be infinite gain to have foreign matter removed, and nothing left but pure gold. While each person is to be treated according to the law of right, yet each person is not to be treated in the very same way. The father is to treat the son as a *son*, and the son is to treat the father as a *father*. Husband and wife, teacher and scholar, ruler and subject, are to act in love towards each other according to the *relation* of each one. As I would not want to be dealt with unfairly, so I must not deal unfairly.

The strife between capital and labor would be ended and the world revolutionized if the golden rule were carried out. It is certainly a fair question whether any man can make millions of money in a few years without breaking the golden rule. Even if the man gives away millions, does that justify the business which grasps so much? Would it not be better to have a smaller profit, with less to give away, and more to remain in the hands

of the people? Thus with lower profits merchandise and property would be cheaper, and would not that be better, all things considered? We must not be blinded by custom. So much wealth is not a sign of health. The discontented poor are not all wrong, and the contented rich are not all right. We must discriminate so as to reach the simple truth. There are evils, and the religion of Christ condemns them; evils, and the religion of Christ can cure them. The socialism of the good time coming will be the socialism of Christianity.

CHAPTER VII.

GREATNESS OF THE HUMAN SOUL.

THE topic of this chapter may strike certain persons as not one of the great thoughts of the Bible. The littleness of man would seem to them to be more in harmony with the truth. To expatiate on the greatness of the soul in the presence of a tribe of savages appears like irony. In fact, to view the mass of the earth's population just as they are is a humbling sight. It may be questioned, therefore, whether our theme is anything more than a manifestation of human conceit, and whether it is not calculated to lower the soul rather than exalt it. Does not Scripture say that man is a "worm," and that "all nations are before God as nothing?" Yes, it says that, and much more of the same kind; and the noblest minds would be willing to express themselves in just such language. The great apostle could say, "I am less than the least of all saints." There is a sense in which man is little, and a sense in which he is great, and his very littleness may

at times prove his greatness. That our subject is not contrary to Scripture will be seen as we unfold it. Indeed, certain great thoughts of the Bible may enable us to apprehend our exalted position in the system of the Almighty.

The greatness of the soul may be affirmed from the fact that it is made in the *image of God*. No feeling or thought of man has a right to set aside a truth of this kind. Admitting that the moral image of God has been lost, the natural image remains. The soul as such is pure spirit, and that peculiar substance never can be changed by any act which it may put forth. No kind of evil touches the essence of the soul. Ignorance and sin characterize the state of the mind, but the mind itself, as the likeness of Deity, is beyond their search. If darkness and depravity could corrupt a spiritual essence its identity would be gone, and a miracle of creation would be needed to place it where it was at first. Here then is a power which bears a resemblance to the Supreme Power, a being which bears a resemblance to the Supreme Being.

The faculties of this finite spirit are modelled after the faculties of the Infinite Spirit as far as that is possible. We can think, remember, imagine. Certain fundamental ideas are in us from the first, without which we

could not take a single intelligent step. As, for instance, time and space, cause and order; number and straightness, the true and the false, right and wrong. Besides the intellectual nature, there is the emotional, whose home is the heart; then the faculty of choice, which proclaims the fact of personality. The *will* is the most wonderful part of the soul. Over all these is that inward eye called consciousness; the soul subject and object at the same time. The mind thus constituted is to exist forever. An eternity of development is not a small thought. "The very greatness of our powers makes this life look pitiful; the very pitifulness of this life forces on our thoughts to another; and the prospect of another gives a dignity and a value to this life which promises it; and thus this life is at once great and little, and we rightly condemn it while we exalt its importance."* A mind with such attributes is anything but mean. Though God only is great, yet souls that are made like him have a secondary greatness. It is not surprising that we are commanded to "honor all men." The infant of a day may be revered as a reflection of the Eternal Light.

There is a tendency in all souls which works

* Cardinal Newman, Sermon on "The Greatness and Liteness of Human Life."

its way blindly towards the *Divine*. The movement appertains to the very nature of the human mind. It is not the same as when a person has an intuition of God, or a consciousness of God, or a conviction that there is a God. The tendency is deeper and more indistinct than these. It is not the result of thought or any action of the will, although both thought and will may awaken it, and even cause us somewhat to apprehend it. The tendency towards the Divine is constitutional, and cannot be destroyed by any amount of sin. Souls in perdition will have it; and although they may want to escape from its power, it yet remains as a witness for God. This divine movement of the creaturely spirit points to its high dignity, and suggests the destiny for which it was made, being a perpetual protest also against the fallen soul because a destination of darkness is now its lot. The strange feeling of *loss*, without being able to distinguish what the loss is, joins on to the divine tendency and gives meaning to it.

Consider now the *extent of human workmanship* as an illustration of the greatness of the human soul. Although it is not possible for the most gifted mind to take in the marvelous variety of this workmanship, yet let one thing be noted down after another that an

approach may be made towards it. Think, to begin with, of the buildings that now stand in cities, villages, and country places. Having looked at the more common dwellings, mark those that are distinguished for strength and architectural beauty—the public and private edifices, the palaces and cathedrals. Put by themselves the temples and towers, the monuments and pyramids, and the great wall of China. See the collective ships on lake, river, and sea; the light-houses, life-boats, and life-preservers; the great bridges, tunnels, and aqueducts; the carts, carriages, and railway trains. Take note of the varied tools and instruments that are used, as if man had additional hands and feet, and as if hearing and sight were intensified. Consider what has resulted from the lever, wheel, pulley, wedge, and screw. Let not the vast range of machinery be lost sight of; the forces of nature made to be the servants of man; so that power is generated equal to the power of the entire human race. Count over the inventions of the past and present; especially those that astonish us by their mystery and movement; words heard hundreds of miles away, and the wealth of the soul conveyed across oceans and continents in a moment of time. Then the discoveries that have been made with reference to the laws of

nature; and how the planetary bodies can be weighed, their motions determined, and their orbits described; so that these distant worlds are better known to us than many objects near at hand. We are to think also of the sculpture, painting, and music; the second spreading farther than the first, and the third spreading farther than the second; each in its way trying to reach the spiritual, and, in moments of high inspiration, the divine. Taste is displayed in furniture and curiously shaped vessels, in watches and silver-ware, in jewels and clothing. We imitate trees and clouds and the flash of the lightning. What a manifestation of mind also is the collective literature of time! History and philosophy, science and theology, expressing thought, and also developing it. Language is duplicated when written. That the contents of the mind can be spread out on paper and then read is wonderful. It is plain that a new world has been added to the old world by the power of souls.

“It is a strange and mournful truth,” says Frederick W. Robertson, “that the qualities which enable men to shine are exactly those which minister to the worst ruin. God’s highest gifts—talent, beauty, feeling, imagination, power—carry with them the possibility

of the highest heaven and the lowest hell. Be sure that it is by that which is highest in you that you may be lost. It is the awful warning, and not the excuse of evil, that the light which leads astray is light from heaven. The shallow fishing-boat glides safely over the reefs where the noble bark strands: it is the very might and majesty of her career that bury the sharp rock deeper in her bosom."* The fact that the soul is intrusted with its own *eternal interests* shows how great it must be. A responsibility of this kind is really fearful. Whether I shall be happy forever or miserable forever depends upon the action of my free will. No being can make a choice for me. I am thrust in upon myself. In singleness of accountability I must thread my way through the labyrinth of time, must enter the viewless future in seclusion, and must face a destiny which is the outcome of my personality.

The mind is greater than its conscious experience makes known to us. Back of consciousness is a region of life, intimations of which come forth in unexpected moments, surprising us with sights that we never saw before, and inspirations that quicken us for an instant and then depart. Revelations of

* "Sermons," Second Series, xv.

hidden wealth appear; but links in the train of association that started these we cannot detect. For days we are troubled because we cannot recall a certain thought, when all at once it leaps into consciousness. Many a time by hard study we cannot give shape to a sentence that we want, neither can we unfold a great truth in a manner to satisfy us, while at other times the work is done with ease. Even in sleep visions flit through the soul that we never beheld when awake. Certain first truths of the mind may have a sphere of labor in the depths of our being, and the fruit of that labor may come to the surface when needed. Possibly at times angels are moving us, and as the outcome of their working we have thoughts of originality.

Greatness of soul is seen in the *power of habit*. Proficiency would not be possible if habits did not exist. All our movements would be isolated; they would begin and end with themselves. We should have to do over and over again the very same things, whereas now we become fixed in the calling or character we have cultivated. The work is then easier, and can be reckoned upon with certainty. The whole mental process is thus arranged in compact sections, and does not appear as fugitive sparks and atoms of

thought. While power is seen in the formation of habits, power is also economized by this very means, and can be used in establishing other lines of action at the very time the habits are working by their compressed energy. In all this we behold grasp of soul, order, and calmness. There are habits that hold the mind forever, and which make one to tremble by the sweep of their power. The influence of a trained human spirit may encircle the globe, as if it were reaching out to a kind of omnipresence.

Even in *sin* there are evidences of greatness. If man did not have all the faculties of an accountable being he could not sin, and the greatness of his sin shows the greatness of his mind. Those persons are not consistent who lessen sin, but exalt the soul. It is the same natural power that goes into sin that goes into holiness, only the power is reversed. The engine that presses a train back is the same that draws it forward. Sin is the great monopoly. "It cannot be doubted that human energy in this world reaches its mightiest achievements when put forth in the service of evil. Force of human character finds its most athletic illustrations in the bad passions. The human soul has developed more power in cultivating and strengthening and organizing

and concentrating sin, than in destroying it." Sin is inventive. What efforts are put forth to make it attractive! The dwellings of vice are beautified, and a smiling welcome is given to all who will enter. How suggestive are the words "gin palaces"; palaces of ruin to thousands of souls. Sometimes a greater amount of mind is seen in contrivances for evil than in contrivances for good. "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." They watch opportunities and improve them. They exhibit skill and tact, determination and self-denial. They make sin to appear respectable, and wrong to appear right. The utmost ingenuity is sometimes made in transforming evil into good, and good into evil. The temple of Diana at Ephesus must be equally great with the temple of God at Jerusalem. It is startling the amount of power that has resulted from a deceived conscience.

It is curious that *all men want to be well thought of*. This is really a testimony in favor of goodness at the very time the soul does not care for it. It seems almost a reminiscence of the golden age, when man primeval lived in peace and the smile of God was heaven to his soul. That first man was never able to forget the clear morning he spent with the angels;

and the approving welcome which they gave him lingered about his soul, even as the rays of the sun linger about the horizon after the sun has set. He was loth to confess that that tribute of honor was his no more: he clung to it, though by right it was not his. Like Saul, who wanted to be honored by Samuel when God had left him, so Adam wanted to retain his good name though he had lost his goodness. This feeling of the first man seems to have been conveyed to all his descendants, and so each of them wishes to be well thought of. We cannot say that all this is folly, although folly is connected with it. Something of the higher nature blends with the lower, and beauty in its orphan state mingles with it. Let a man have all the possessions that the earth can bestow, he will yet not feel satisfied if he fails to gain the esteem of his fellow-men. Their esteem is greater than all things else. This shows that there is a greatness about the human soul, and that that soul does not sink into nothingness at the moment of death.

The *unrest* of the soul points to its greatness. The quality of the unrest is not that of a mind little by nature and little in the object for which it was created. The soul was made for God, but has left him—hence its unrest. To be unhappy and to be conscious of it are

marks of greatness. The misery of man is that of a king who has lost his kingdom by his own folly. His crown is in the dust, his sceptre broken, his royal dress in rags, and he in exile lamenting his fate. Guilt works in the conscience. Disharmony reigns in the soul. There is no power or passion that has the ease and majesty of righteousness. Wants crave for satisfaction, but find not that which meets their case. New objects please only for a time. There are hours when a faintness falls upon the spirit and when pastime brings no gladness. The soul tires in its chase for good. A sigh ascends from the heart. That sigh is a prayer. There is a void which nothing fills. The soul is moody, distant, strange. It is not itself; never has been itself. A pain is at the centre of being. A burden is there which nothing removes. Back of the smile is heaviness. Back of the song is sadness. The spirit looks out and away. It seems to pierce eternity. It is in search of fountains of life. It would drink and be refreshed. "One striking fact about human misery, brought out by the Gospel, is that the sense of our wretchedness is almost always accompanied by a sense of the dignity and grandeur of our nature. Brutes may suffer and die, without remorse, without hope, without despair. But so it cannot be

with man; he has remorse for the past, and fear or hope for the future. And this is because, made originally in the image of God, that image is still and ever before the eye of reason and conscience, though the heart and will be fixed on inferior and transient delights. Man is a sinner, condemned to death; and the condemnation is so terrible because he was made not to die, but to live forever; though he might aspire to a throne, he walks to a scaffold, and the scaffold becomes awful because it has such a regal victim; awful even though, yea, because, the condemnation is just."*

There is in the God-created soul a *sentiment of the infinite*. All souls have it; the lowest as well as the highest. It is hidden for a time even as the rich gem is hidden in the earth; but by and by occasions call it forth. There are times when the spirit breaks loose, when it flies away with unearthly pinions, when it thinks of a home that is lovelier than any home here. The clear blue sky encompassing the earth, the white clouds sailing over it as if they were the islands of the angels, the birds of passage on their way to a sunny land, the mountains that go up to heaven, awaken the sentiment of the infinite. The moaning of

* Smith, "System of Christian Theology," p. 381.

the wind among the trees, the glimmering of stars in the distant canopy of night, the rolling of thunder like the chariot wheels of God, are fitted to suggest the infinite. A tear in the eye when comfort avails not to bless, the solitary nature of human destiny, a grave-yard with its silent inhabitants, an ancient monument standing in the midst of a populous city, will bring out the sentiment of the infinite. There are strains of poetry and flights of eloquence, passages of Scripture and visions of the Son of God, that move one towards the infinite. Even beholding the low rivalries of men will drive a thoughtful mind in the direction of it. Love and sorrow seem to have something of the infinite about them, and the feeling of loss and demerit cannot very well be bounded. Is it not a fact that sin itself, the great mystery, sweeps away every limitation? The soul apart from all voluntary movements, by its very constitution, demands the infinite.

There is nothing that impresses us so deeply in regard to the greatness of the soul as the *greatness of salvation*. The fact that God had to become man in order to open up a way of recovery for man is by itself a most convincing argument. If the human soul were insignificant, it is not at all likely that an incarnation

would be necessary. Considering that God is a being of infinite resources, he certainly would have struck upon a method far more simple than that of an incarnation if it had been suitable for him to do so. The fact that he has done no such thing, but has selected the present method, shows that an incarnation could alone meet the case of man's redemption. This wonderful stoop of Divinity to humanity betokens the high estimation that was placed upon the human soul. We can have an idea of man by looking at the God-man.

Still further, considering what befell the God-man as he travailed in the greatness of his strength in order to work out salvation, we behold an additional proof of the dignity of human nature. If the incarnation as a preparatory step points to the greatness of man, much more does redemption as the one saving characteristic point to that greatness. When we think that the Possessor of all things emptied himself, so that the Independent became dependent, we are startled into thoughtfulness respecting the creature who could only be rescued by such self-abnegation. Then, too, noticing the fact that such a One with such a spirit did allow himself to be misrepresented and persecuted, condemned and crucified, the conclusion is, that a price like that

never would have been paid for man's redemption if worth did not belong to the nature of man. A great soul committed a great sin, and so a great salvation was necessary.

The grandeur of human nature is seen when the soul is acting under the power and presence of the Spirit of God. It is a remark of John Howe, "That the truest notion we can yet have of the primitive nature and capacity of man, is by beholding it in its gradual restoration." The greatness of the soul grows upon us as we behold the ever-brightening manifestations of Christian character. Devotion with reference to the highest good of man, seeking for righteousness as the chief excellence, making God the centre of every movement, courageous in the midst of opposition, peaceful in the midst of conflict, humble when at the highest point,—such a soul is great. Then when the whole work of restoration is complete and the man of earth has become the man of heaven, the grandeur of human nature will be a most glorious reality. The entire people of God perfected will show greatness and splendor such as at present we cannot imagine. If there was grandeur when the temple was in ruins, much more will there be grandeur when it is restored.

The *cherubim* seem to symbolize the princely

state of the people of God. The *ox*, the *lion*, the *eagle*, and *man* were combined together, as if to furnish us with an idea of life of great power. In the ox was the productive principle, in the lion were might and daring, in the eagle swiftness and far-seeing vision, and in man intelligence and conscience. The cherubim could not represent God, as all images of the Deity are forbidden. They seem therefore to represent an exceedingly high form of creaturely life, inasmuch as the highest samples of creaturely existence are merged together so as to constitute *one exalted being*. The cherubim guarded the way of the tree of *life*, and in the book of Ezekiel they are called *living* creatures, while in the book of Revelation they seem to stand at the very *summit of life*. They and the four and twenty elders "sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed *us* to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Thus the cherubim along with the elders were *redeemed*, and so they represent *redeemed humanity*. They sung a *new* song, showing that their experience was peculiar. "This bespeaks the wonderful fact, brought out in the history of redemption, that man's nature is to be exalted

to the dwelling-place of God. In Christ it is taken, so to speak, into the very bosom of the Deity; and because it is so highly honored in him, it shall attain to more than angelic glory in his members, be admitted to dwell, if we may venture to express ourselves, nearest to the throne of God, and be fitted for giving forth the most wonderful manifestations of his glorious attributes." *

* Fairbairn, "Typology of the Scriptures," vol. i., p. 197.

PART III.

GREAT THOUGHTS OF THE BIBLE WHICH PERTAIN TO
CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAVED.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS.

It seems as if our souls had movements which cannot be explained save as we link them on to heaven. We have a kind of dim recollection of that glorious place. Thoughts are in us which seem to be native to the world of light. Perhaps words are spoken here, that are spoken there; only that the sound and the sense are so changed that the inhabitants of that upper kingdom would not recognize their meaning. On many a day we pant for unknown abodes; the place we call home points to one that is better. We are always in a foreign land, and seem strange to ourselves and to others. Those who are friends are yet strangers. There is a burden that we carry alone, and possibly a love that we never express. This fact of reticence is a characteristic of all mankind. We are never really ourselves while here.

There is a mystical region in all human souls. Some of our finest thoughts are the outcome of the unconscious working of the

mind. Studied workmanship would lack a certain beauty if the unconscious did not mingle with it. A hidden angel goes with us, inspiring us when we know it not, and bearing us up to mountain summits where glory shines. There is a poetry of souls. It is the language of the unconscious life. It has euphony which tells of the eternal paradise. The Eden that we have lost points to the Eden yet to be gained, when the sunny days of yore will come again as our sweet home nestles among the hills of God. In that land of eternal sunshine the fair people dwell in the midst of peace, and the happy hours glide away like the rivers of the great city that has no night. In skies that are remote there is a radiance that stretches on forever, and harmonies that float through them echoing joy.

Music of the highest order sounds the depths of the soul, and awakens a class of spiritual faculties. Music is a distinct language, quite ethereal in its movement, and very near to pure spirit. If we need to be aroused to action or hushed into stillness, music is a fit instrument for that purpose. It seems as if there was a something in music besides itself, as if powers from the higher world entered into it and made it effectual. "Is it possible," remarks Cardinal Newman, "that that inex-

haustible evolution and disposition of notes, so rich yet so simple, so intricate yet so regulated, so various yet so majestic, should be a mere sound, which is gone and perishes? Can it be that those mysterious stirrings of heart, and keen emotions, and strange yearnings after we know not what, and awful impressions from we know not whence, should be wrought in us by what is unsubstantial, and comes and goes, and begins and ends in itself? It is not so, it cannot be. No; they have escaped from some higher sphere; they are the outpouring of eternal harmony in the medium of created sound; they are echoes from our home, they are the voice of angels, or the magnificat of saints, or the living laws of divine governance, or the divine attributes; something are they besides themselves, which we cannot compass, which we cannot utter;—though mortal man, and he perhaps not otherwise distinguished above his fellows, has the gift of eliciting them.”*

But after death—what? When the sunset gun echoes on the still air the concealed gate is opened, and the perfected spirit enters the land of the morning. Death is the dark-faced usher who opens that gate; after which he is seen no more by the ransomed soul. One

* Quoted in Prof. Shairp's "Aspects of Poetry," p. 398.

imagines that a soul divested of its body must act as if something were wanting, and must be feeling round for that which is lost. In a moment, however, it is at ease, and there is a sweet realization of its state. Angels are at hand in order to accompany the disembodied spirit to its home, and to introduce it to the people who are found there. The way to the palace of God is one of pleasantness. A strange and lonely feeling, which we might suppose to belong to a soul, is lost in a feeling of liberty. The angels fill up the golden moments with thoughts of the glory of the place they are about to enter. The new spirit reaches the wondrous kingdom, and is welcomed by the heavenly salutations of saint and seraph. The vision that bursts upon the soul is most glorious.

“A voice is heard on earth of kinsfolk weeping
The loss of one they love ;
But he is gone where the redeemed are keeping
A festival above.

“The mourners throng the way, and from the steeple
The funeral bell tolls slow ;
But on the golden streets the holy people
Are passing to and fro ;

“And saying as they meet, ‘Rejoice ! another
Long waited for is come ;
The Saviour’s heart is glad, a younger brother
Hath reached the Father’s home.’ ”

As Adam must have been greatly astonished by his *first night* in Eden, so the soul must be greatly astonished by its *first day* in heaven. Adam beholds the sun sinking in the west. He is amazed. The darkness thickens. What can this mean? The air is still. The stars appear. They are new to him. What are they? Have they just been created? The night continues. Will it always be night? Adam falls asleep. Did that first man on that first night dream? If he did, that first dream must have been of day. Adam awakes, looks around; it is still dark. But shortly there is a change. Light begins to gather about the eastern sky. The birds chant their morning hymn. The sun rises. Adam has learned of the night. So just the opposite, the liberated soul has learned of the day, but it is a day that has no night. The redeemed spirit must be carried away in ecstasy because of the crystal purity that is found on every hand. Hours must pass before it becomes habituated to the excellencies of the place and people.

The Bible speaks of “the *city* of the *living God*.” That heightens it. Though heaven is chiefly a *life*, it is none the less a *place* of beauty. We think of it as of great extent, the centre of all things, the one place where creation is recapitulated, the metropolis of the

universe, the country of God. Aristotle, though a heathen philosopher, could say, "Heaven, as the place of circular motion, and the scene of unchangeable order, stands nearest the first moving cause, and is under its immediate influence; it is the place where the ancients, guided by the correct tradition of a lost wisdom, have placed the Divine abode."* Astronomers tell us that the law of gravitation demands a central universe, around which all the starry systems revolve. Several Christian philosophers think that this central universe may be heaven.

"From this glorious centre," remarks Dr. Dick, "embassies may be occasionally despatched to all surrounding worlds, in every region of space. Here, too, deputations from all the different provinces of creation, may occasionally assemble, and the inhabitants of different worlds mingle with each other, and learn the grand outlines of those physical operations and moral transactions, which have taken place in their respective spheres. Here, may be exhibited to the view of unnumbered multitudes, objects of sublimity and glory, which are nowhere to be found within the wide expanse of creation. Here, intelligences of the highest order, who have attained the

* Schwegler, "Hist. of Philosophy," p. 128.

most sublime heights of knowledge and virtue, may form the principal part of the population of this magnificent region. Here, the GRAND-
EUR of the Deity, the glory of his physical and moral perfections, and the immensity of his empire, may strike the mind with more bright effulgence, and excite more elevated emotions of admiration and rapture, than in any other province of universal nature. In fine, this vast and splendid central universe may constitute that august mansion referred to in Scripture, under the designation of THE THIRD HEAVENS—THE THRONE OF THE ETERNAL—THE HEAVEN OF HEAVENS—THE HIGH AND HOLY PLACE—and THE LIGHT THAT IS INACCESSIBLE AND FULL OF GLORY.” *

* “Philosophy of a Future State,” Part III.

CHAPTER I.

THE SAVED ARE BLESSED WITH THE VISION OF THE TRIUNE GOD.

A CLASS of writers have attempted to make heaven tangible and attractive by crowding into it as much of the earthly and human as possible. Our affections have been rendered voluptuous in view of the objects they are to find in the other life. What an infinite contrast between such views and the one that God is heaven! A species of naturalism has been working in good souls, so that their vision is darkened with reference to the higher world. Only the Godlike can see God.

Speculative minds have told us that we are rays of the Infinite Sun, waves of the Infinite Ocean, pulsations of the Infinite Heart; thus going to another extreme. Mystics have had golden dreams of God, and of the soul that is lost in him.

The distaste of mortals in the midst of pleasure, the tired feeling when seated on the pinnacle of fame, the companionships that still

leave the soul companionless, show that God is the one that is needed. In the Vedic hymns we have the two following sentences, which express the deep want of the heart: "Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters. Yearning for him the far-seeing, my thoughts move onwards as kine to their pastures." Nothing satisfies but God. Let man reach his normal state, and at once he finds him.

I. VISION OF GOD IN THE UNITY OF HIS BEING.

The ceaseless adoration of all pure souls will express itself in the words, "Our Father which art in heaven." God is a delightful presence, and the soul is wrapped up in him by intense thought and love. The thinking is a loving, and the loving is a thinking. Emotion goes with the thought as if the intellect had in it sensibility, and thought flows out of emotion as if there were a thinking with the heart. He that *loveth knoweth* God. As a complete truth the entire mind goes out to the Supreme, because that entire mind is charmed by infinite excellence. "God is more worthy of our affections because he is the Eternal God, than because he is our Creator; because he is more excellent in his nature, than in his transient actions; the beams of his goodness to us, are

to direct our thoughts and affections to him ; but his own *eternal excellency* ought to be the ground and foundation of our affections to him." *

"God is the absolute ideal." No excellence can be conceived which is not found in God. Risk or danger cannot be predicated of absolute sufficiency. The unbounded knowledge of the divine mind, the unbounded feeling of the divine heart, and the unbounded activity of the divine will, place the Deity out of comparison with any finite intelligence. By reason of a certain familiarity which we have cultivated with reference to God, we are in danger of making him to appear different from what he is. We must strive with our collective powers to keep the *Divine* pure to our vision, scrupulous lest we lower Eternal Perfection. However true it may be that holy beings bear the *image* of God, there is a sense in which we dare not compare him with any creature. A *Divine* Being is so singular that there is nothing the *same* as "his everlasting power and divinity." The divine glory is what it is, because God is what he is. The brilliancy of the Infinite Light would dim the eye of the glowing seraphim if they were to gaze upon it.

* Charnock, "Attributes of God," vol. i., p. 308. New York ed.

The *beautiful* in its completeness is found only in God. All the excellencies that will appear in the onward march of eternity will simply be reflections of divine beauty. "It is through God's shining that all else shines." An Absolute Spirit is light and life, love and liberty, beauty *per se*. When with pure eye we scan the inward possessions of the Godhead, we behold universes of glory, and in these universes systems upon systems, all shining with a divine lustre. See the beauty of those *ideals* that have been in the mind of God from all eternity: ideals of truth, of character, and of form. Ideal cities seem to stand upon the plains of the divine nature, and along the shores of eternal oceans. Archetypal worlds seem to roll around their suns, and trees grow and flowers smile in the gardens of the Lord, and rivers of life flow on forever. There is no telling of the wondrous paintings that hang around the halls of God's nature, and the statues that stand by the gates of peace. When we think of the Deity as a being of infinite resources, we say that he must be a being of *infinite possibilities*, and so we conceive of ideal creatures, systems, and universes as having a place in that great mind, but which will never be made actual out of it. They simply show the wealth of God, and no eye but his ever

gazes upon them. I should say that the possible creations of an Almighty Being must outnumber the actual creations of such a Being. There must be ideals so complete and beautiful that they never can be realized in space and time

The question now arises, Will purified souls have a *direct vision* of the excellences of the divine nature? It is the opinion of certain distinguished men that souls in heaven can see what is going on in the mind of each other, just as we can see what is going on in a watch when we look into it; so it is supposed that the glorified can see directly the thoughts and feelings of God. This gazing upon the Infinite Spirit is what these persons mean by the beatific vision; the highest bliss of heaven consisting in this intuition of the Deity. While it is admitted that no man with his bodily senses can see God, inasmuch as he has no form, yet as the Bible informs us that "the pure in heart shall see God," it is thought that there will be a direct vision of the Most High.

As to the correctness of this view, I will not venture absolutely to deny it, although I am not inclined to accept it. We have no experience of one mind looking into another mind. Even as it regards our own soul we have never seen it. The two essences of mind and matter

are hidden from us, and it is doubtful whether we shall ever know them directly; and as to God's infinite essence, it is too rash to say that we shall see that. We cannot know the Divine Being in the same way that the Divine Being knows himself. God is mirrored in the pure heart; then the pure heart perceives the glorious likeness. "When the soul is calm and composed," says Leighton, "it may behold the face of God shining on it." The Eternal One only reaches us through a certain medium, and we can only reach him through that medium. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." In the Incarnate Saviour the Absolute Spirit takes form, and the silent God becomes the speaking God.

II. VISION OF GOD THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF THE GOD-MAN.

The Son of God is central in the divine nature and central in the divine system. He sustains different relations, and in some of these we notice the fact of development. In his pre-existent state all is fixed in eternal beatitude; he is "the effulgence of God's glory, and the very image of his substance," the treasury of ideals that are to be made real in the march of everlasting time. The first mo-

ment at length appears, and the pendulum of the great clock begins to move never to stop, and so the Son of God creates; revelation making it plain that "all things were made by him." Thus we catch the thought that the absolute God does not act directly, but acts through the *medium* of the *Son*. The medial relation takes on different forms in order to meet the wants of the creatures at certain given times. The Divine Person who conversed with Adam in his primeval state was evidently the Son of God in a visible form, and at various times during the history of the Jewish people he appeared as a *man*, though not a man in the full sense of that word. When the fulness of time came, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us": here we have the God-man. While he was upon earth he suffered and died. The next stage is that of the God-man in a state of glory in heaven, acting as priest and king until the redemptive period closes. The final state is when all the good have been gathered into the celestial commonwealth and when the God-man is their centre and joy forever.

Although the kingdom of grace has ended in the kingdom of glory, and law has taken the place of redemption, Christ still remains as an *incarnate* person. The Apocalypse, giv-

ing an account of heaven, uses this language: "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the *Lamb* is the *light* thereof." The writer even saw "in the midst of the throne a Lamb, as it had been slain," intimating that the Saviour has marks upon his person which show that he once suffered.

The *incarnation* of the Son of God is not merely a *means* with reference to *redemption*, because if that were all it would cease when redemption had done its work. Even if we admit that there could be no incarnation without sin, this does not make an incarnation unnecessary for other ends besides the restoration of the sinful. The wisdom of God is seen in the fact that he makes a single instrument to answer a number of purposes; and all these purposes are included in the original plan. The incarnation, therefore, will continue to be an *eternal means* in the kingdom of God, having treasured up in it a wealth of truth and influence that goes beyond all reckoning.

The glorified God-man has a *universal significance*. "He is set far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come"; it being the intention of God to "gather together

in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." Thus he is not only the head of redeemed humanity, but the head also of the angelic hosts; and as these two classes of beings evidently stand for all holy creatures, it is safe to say that the headship of the God-man has reference to the entire universe of pure minds. He is the sun of the spiritual system, sending forth light and heat to its immense population. Not only does the God-man sum up in himself the glories of the creation, but the excellencies of Deity shine forth in him, so that he can be spoken of as "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In this way he connects the Infinite with the finite, and is the chief medium of divine manifestation. Now the creature can gain a knowledge of God in a way that is more simple than by the teaching of universal nature. The fact that here is a person who is both the *revealer* and the *revelation* of God, makes him to be exactly suited to the finite mind. "The minute and variegated details of the way in which this wondrous economy is extended, God has chosen to withhold from us; but he has oftener than once made to us a broad and a general announcement of its dignity. He tells us that the Lamb who was slain is surrounded by the acclamations of one wide and universal

empire; that the might of his wondrous achievements spreads a tide of gratulation over the multitudes who are about his throne; and that there never ceases to ascend from the worshippers of him who washed us from our sins in his blood, a voice loud as from numbers without number, sweet as from blessed voices uttering joy, when heaven rings jubilee, and loud hosannas fill the eternal regions.”*

The culminating thought is this, that the God-man is the *end* as well as the medium of divine manifestation. It cannot be said of any finite intelligence that he is both *means* and *ultimate end*; but of this unique person it is strictly true that “all things were created *by* him, and *for* him.” This opens up a grand system of Christology, presenting to all the kingdoms of mind the ultimate point towards which they must direct their course. The theophany of the creation seems to be ever seeking the supreme and perfect theophany of Christ. Even dead matter has characters stamped upon it which can only be explained by the existence of the Incarnate Word. “When Paul says that all things were created for and by the love of the Son of God, no one will be able to deny that he regards this Son and his honor as the end of the completion of

* Chalmers, “Astronomical Discourses,” discourse iv.

things even in creation. But he must have deemed the Son of God's love as he actually will be and *is* at the end, consequently as God-man, to be his aim."* The highest philosophy and the highest ethics end here, and theology itself and the absolute religion terminate in the divine-human Mediator. This is the point of unity where God and the creature meet. The beatific vision finds its realization in the God-man. He could say with utmost truth, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In him all is settled; the divine home is reached. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

III. VISION OF GOD MADE POSSIBLE BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

That the work of the Spirit is eternal, and not limited to time, and that it relates to holy beings in heaven, as well as to sinful beings on earth, is an idea that Christian people generally do not think about. It is fair to admit that the Bible does not speak directly upon the subject, and yet indirectly it sheds light upon it. There may indeed be passages of Scripture

* Derner, "Hist. of the Doct. of the Person of Christ," vol. iii., p. 248.

touching the mission of the Spirit in heaven whose meaning has not yet been discovered, but which will be discovered by the Church of the future when the eye is clearer and the heart purer than at present. It is certainly a fact that our knowledge respecting the work of the Spirit is not as extended as our knowledge respecting the work of Christ. It would seem as if there is yet to be a development in regard to this doctrine, in order that it may take its proper place beside the other doctrines of Christianity, and that well-balanced praise may ascend to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. That the Spirit works in seclusion may furnish a reason why little by little we must learn about such a peculiar ministry. We need to be guarded and checked lest with undue freedom we think of the mysterious doings of this Divine Messenger.

The subject may be opened up by such questions as these: As the Spirit leaves the wicked at the moment of death, will he leave the righteous when they die? As "joy in the Holy Ghost" is a characteristic of religion upon earth, will the religion of heaven be destitute of that joy? Since the first and second persons of the trinity have a work to do for heavenly beings, will not the third person also

share in that work? Merely because redemption is ended, does it follow that the mission of the Spirit is ended? Is there not a work of the Spirit that is necessary, though it be not redemptive? Since the Incarnate Word is the objective medium which connects pure minds with God, is not the Divine Spirit the subjective medium which connects pure minds with him? Can the work of the heavenly Mediator be effectual in souls, if the Spirit is not with them?

We learn from Scripture that there is an *order of working* among the persons of the trinity. "The beginning of divine operations is assigned unto the Father, as he is the fountain of Deity itself. The subsisting, establishing, and upholding of all things is ascribed unto the Son. And the *finishing* and *perfecting* of all these works is ascribed to the Holy Ghost:"* With this arrangement, the entire universe of matter and the entire universe of mind can only reach completion through the agency of the Divine Spirit. He is the invisible Artist who beautifies and finishes the divine works. Creation and redemption alike demand his presence. Religion can neither begin nor continue without supernatural power. Absolute goodness belongs only to the Deity. The

Owen, "On the Spirit," book i., chap. iv.

highest created being is only relatively and conditionally good; never good without God. A religion that could spring up in the soul from the working of blank faculties would be a dry affair, having not the tone and quality of godliness. In order to have a suitable basis for communion with God, there must be a godly element in the soul. The normal state of creaturely minds is when they are filled with the Spirit.

As making it certain that the work of the Spirit is not confined to fallen man, we know that the Sinless Saviour was "full of the Holy Ghost." If he could not act without the Spirit, it is doubly certain that glorified saints cannot act without him. We might suppose that the human nature of Christ would be sustained by his divine nature, and yet according to the order of God he must come under "the power of the Spirit." There is reason to believe that our first parents were spiritually endowed when they were created. The gift of the Spirit antedates redemption, and is continued after redemption has passed away. "As the union of natures in the person of Christ can never be dissolved, so, in virtue of the mediatorial office of Christ, the Holy Ghost dwells forever in his kingdom."* When the Redeemer en-

* Martensen, "Christian Dogmatics," p. 333.

couraged his disciples with the statement that the Comforter would come to them, and “abide with them *for ever*,” it is just possible that the words “for ever” should be understood *literally* and not figuratively.

At any rate, beholding the power of the Spirit as manifested in the life of Christ, we can have some idea of the richness of mind and character which will distinguish the inhabitants of heaven, they being animated by the same power. The divine light that will flood the intellect and the divine life that will quicken the heart, will give such clearness of vision and such activity of soul as will make the highest type of piety upon earth to appear quite low. The miracles of life and of love that will characterize the heavenly state we cannot even imagine. The excellencies of the Deity will be apprehended with new power under the eternal ministry of the Blessed Spirit.

Thus the vision of God and the doctrine of the trinity go together. Each person of the Godhead fits the purified soul, and the glorious three in one will be the heaven of that soul forever. The three faces of God seem to furnish the plan for the grand theology of the endless life. “It may be affirmed that the economy of human salvation has, *to the human*

family, so signalized the distinction of the Triune Nature, that it will not again be lost sight of; but rather will be more and more evolved in the view of the redeemed race. This at least may readily be supposed, that human minds shall find all their sense of safety, and all the calmness of their joy, to spring from their knowledge of the Great Mystery, of which on earth they had received the rudiments, and which heaven shall much more develop." *

Wonderful Being! thy glories we cannot recount. We only know that thou art supreme excellence, and that thy loveliness is fairer than all fair things. We are lifted up by the contemplation of thy glory, and sent forward on rapid wing by the inspiration that comes from it. Touched by thy nature we have an expansion of soul, and a most exalted excitement thrills us as if heaven had come to greet us on our way. We hunger for eternal delights, and look evermore for the great morning to come. When the king of seraphs and of saints appears it will be the sunrise of glory. The last moment of earth will usher in the first moment of heaven. A sigh ascends from our heart in view of the littleness of time. May the Blessed One guide us in our path, and

* Taylor, "Saturday Evening," p. 326.

his shadow cover us on the scorching days of life. We shall wander no more when he fills the soul with his love. Happiness shall then gild the hours, and we shall be at rest with the Lord.

CHAPTER II.

THE SAVED ARE BLESSED WITH SINLESS CHARACTER.

A FINE religious instinct enables one to strike off many true things respecting heaven, while without that instinct the Biblical statements relating to the subject avail but little. The religious instinct has a law of its own by which it is guided, and because of that law it beholds excellencies which the common mind never detects. There is a refinement about the pure religious instinct which enables it to see heavenly beauties at once, as if lingering rays of glory were always around it, giving it an aptitude for these things. As the musician, the painter, and the poet cannot reach perfection in their art by the mere study of principles, but rather by the intuitional working of their genius, so it is with the Christian in his attempts to picture the celestial life. The well-endowed heavenly mind contains within itself a prophecy of the divine kingdom. It seems to be ever bending over towards that empire;

its tastes and its tendencies are in that direction; and the feeling goes with it that its aspirations are to find their realization there, and not here. Saintly spirits like Samuel Rutherford and Archbishop Leighton have about them the air of the upper kingdom, and so they think and speak of it as natives, and not as strangers. They seem to be ever away to those fair climes, bidding us to come that we may dwell in the midst of peace.

A glance at the pure character of Madame Guyon may help to bring us round to the study of the subject that is before us. "As to my own state," she remarks, "it is difficult for me to describe it. Every inward motion, originating from self, seemed to be taken away and lost; so much so, that all the soul's movements and actions were now in God, under the dominion of his will, and entirely in union with him; the soul living in and of God, as the body lives in and of the air it breathes. Nothing entered into my imagination but what the Lord was pleased to bring; my heart, as it seemed to me, was pure; my will was firmly established in one direction. Human language cannot well describe this state. God only knows perfectly what it is."*

Although souls that are living upon the

* Upham, "Life of Madame Guyon," vol. i., p. 338.

lowest plane of Christian life may have no great desire for a heaven of spotless purity, wishing rather to be charmed by its visible glories, it is none the less attractive to those persons who have felt the evil of sin, and long for holiness as the chief good. While it is admitted that a rich materialism is connected with heaven, sufficient to regale the senses and the imagination of those who live there, its prime characteristics are spiritual. That the Bible has high-wrought metaphors respecting the celestial country is true, as that is the only style which can lift us up towards a greatness which cannot be literally described. Jamblichus says, "Things more excellent than every image, are expressed through images." Figures of speech may heighten spirituality. One thing is certain, that no appeal is ever made to the lower nature of man in any of the Biblical descriptions of paradise, showing that they differ from the paradise of Mohammed. Note a medium passage from the Koran: "As for the servants of God, they shall have a certain provision in paradise, namely, delicious fruits: and they shall be honored: they shall be placed in gardens of pleasure, leaning on couches, opposite to one another: a cup shall be carried round unto them, filled from a limpid fountain, for the delight of those who

drink: it shall not oppress the understanding, neither shall they be inebriated therewith. And near them *shall lie the virgins of paradise*, refraining their looks *from beholding any besides their spouses*, having large black eyes, and resembling the eggs of an ostrich covered with feathers from the dust." *

I. SINLESS CHARACTER IS THE PERFECTION OF ORDER.

Sin is disorder. One sin of the angels completely unhinged their minds. The initial sin devoured the collective good of the soul, leaving neither hope nor help for the doomed spirit. Those first immortals of heaven were most surely converted to sin; entering the kingdom of death by an act that was wholly their own; there being nothing that shows such fearful creative power by the finite mind as the absolute choice of sin. What was true of the first sin of the angels was equally true of the first sin of man.

What a wonderful moment that will be when the redeemed soul shall have the clear consciousness that sin is gone, and that holiness has taken the place of it! The final act of God in perfecting the human spirit would seem to be of a higher grade than all his pre-

* Sale's "Koran," chap. xxxvii., p. 367.

vious acts, just because now the work is *finished*, and the soul begins the journey of eternal ages with nothing to check it, but with a movement to hasten it forward that is complete. The faculties which were once in a state of antagonism are now in a state of harmony. The decisions of the intellect do not clash with the feelings of the heart, and the commands of the conscience do not go contrary to the bent of the will. The imagination is the home of beautiful ideals. The propensities and desires are heavenly instead of earthly. The pure reason seems like the golden candle-stick in the sanctuary of the soul whose light is from God, and never goes out. Each impulse and thought, each power and principle, are a celestial choir chanting the psalms of Eternal Love. Ransomed man is divine order. Holiness is the universal principle and the universal ruler. The entire soul being in a perfect condition, perfect action flows from it. Not only is the mind harmonized, but it is in a state of harmony with all the minds of heaven. Then it is fastened by a golden chain to the eternal order of God, and so finite and Infinite march on together with the same ultimate end.

II. SINLESS CHARACTER IS THE PERFECTION OF LIFE.

Although the human being even in heaven might be viewed as animated by different kinds of life, yet the life of holiness is highest and all-embracing, and is alone worthy of the name of life. Mere *existence* forever is a very different thing from *holy living* forever. There can be no eternal holiness without eternal existence, but there may be eternal existence without eternal holiness. *Life* in the Gospel sense expresses *all good*, just as *death* expresses *all evil*. The Scripture intimates that the righteous are to be "filled with all the fulness of God." Souls in their totality are to be instinct with divine life. They take the full step and strike the mark each time. They are even to reach "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." That is surely a grand life. Christ is the ideal of all ideals, and having taken in hand to save lost men he lifts them up to his own perfection. When we allow ourselves to have courage to face God's infinite mercy, we can see that a slight would be cast upon it if his redemption did not transform us into complete men.

There are principles of biology which may be used to illustrate the life of heavenly souls.

1. There is the fact of heredity. The saints are "born of God." They belong to the race of twice-born men; first generated, then regenerated. Their character and action are godlike. 2. They have a perfect environment. There is "the land of the silver sky," which contains excellencies adapted to both mind and body. Then there are the unnumbered tribes of saints and seraphim: these influence the soul. The triune God, however, is the great environment. He is both source and sustainer of life. 3. Heavenly souls have a complete connection with this environment. They consequently receive all that is necessary to their eternal well-being. 4. Their life is in proportion to what they draw from the fountain of good. The larger they grow, the more they want and the more they receive. All the conditions being complete, there is complete life.

III. SINLESS CHARACTER IS THE PERFECTION OF LOVELINESS.

The holiness of heaven is associated in our mind with brightness. The pure is attractive. We are always pleased with the innocence of childhood. If we are repelled by a good man, it is because he has repellent qualities. Even the goodness that is in him loses its lustre by

reason of the shadow of sin. Celestial character is finished, and so it charms. It has a freshness and ruddy hue, reminding one of health and the spring days of heaven. A feeling of warmth comes over us by the mere thought of it. "How pleasing a spectacle will it be when the glorified soul shall dwell in the contemplation of itself! view itself round on every part, turn its eye from glory to glory, from beauty to beauty, from one excellency to another; and trace over the whole draught of this image, this so exquisite piece of divine workmanship, drawn out in its full perfection upon itself! when the glorified eye, and divinely enlightened and inspirited mind, shall apply itself to criticise and make a judgment upon every several lineament, every touch and stroke; shall stay itself and scrupulously insist upon every part; view at leisure every character of glory the blessed God hath instamped upon it,—how will this likeness now satisfy!"*

The holiness of the saints is the perfection of loveliness because there is not a single part of the mind that is free from its power. Knowledge has no such all-embracing quality. It does influence directly or indirectly every faculty of the mind, but it does not spread an

* Howe, "The Blessedness of the Righteous," chap. ix.

atmosphere over the entire soul like holiness, making every plan to be pure and every picture of the imagination to be holy. We say that no man is a Christian unless he loves God *supremely*, and yet love may be supreme at the very time a person is in an imperfect moral state. The meaning of supreme love, therefore, must be that it has the ascendancy in the soul, has the *governing power*, the majority is on the side of it. The fact, however, that *sin* is found in the person who loves supremely, makes it evident that he does not love God with *all* the heart, soul, mind, and strength. The love, then, of saved men expresses *totality*; it *fills* the soul. "Once I dreamed," says Dr. Payson, "of being transported to heaven; and being surprised to find myself so calm and tranquil in the midst of my happiness, I inquired the cause. The reply was: 'When you were on earth, you resembled a bottle but partly filled with water, which was agitated by the least motion—now you are like the same bottle *filled to the brim*, which cannot be disturbed.'"

IV. SINLESS CHARACTER IS THE PERFECTION OF SECURITY.

It is a most blessed thought that the sons of heaven are absolutely safe, it making no

difference what may be the changes during the roll of endless time. Not for a century or a thousand years are they saved, but they are *eternally saved*. There is no place for the working of the painful emotions of anxiety and fear. There is no probation in heaven: trial ended with the earthly life. There is nothing now but fruition. If you say it is *possible* that the redeemed may sin, I say it is *certain* that they will not sin. They have been trained. They knew evil by experience, and turned from it. They preferred God to all things else. The mind at length was set in purity, and lived in it. When the soul is weighted with holiness, there can be no failure. If the intellect completely receives truth, if the heart completely loves truth, and if the will completely follows truth, how can the soul sink into evil? When pure habits are added to pure habits until *perfect fixedness* in character is reached, that fixed character is *eternal*. "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Permanent character, good or bad, will never change.

Redeemed men are more secure than Adam in his state of innocence. Adam fell; fell easily, and fell quickly; but the saints in heaven do not fall. Thus man under *grace* is

stronger than man under *law*. Let us suppose the existence of a *vase* of beautiful workmanship. When it was first made it astonished every beholder. A thousand figures were on it; some large, and some so small that they could not be seen with the naked eye. No one figure was like any other, and each was complete in itself. It was the only vase of the kind in existence, and its value could not be equalled by anything upon earth. On a certain day it was broken into ten thousand pieces. The loss was terrible, and hope seemed to vanish away forever. But mark this: The maker of the vase gathered up each fragment. All was confusion. But he united each piece, and restored the vase to its former condition. By looking at it no one could know that it had ever been broken. Yea, more than this, the vase was improved. It was not possible now to break it. Such a vase is redeemed man. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

V. SINLESS CHARACTER IS THE PERFECTION OF HEAVEN.

While heaven may be viewed as a great galaxy of excellencies, its chief excellence is holiness. This shines brighter to the spiritual mind and satisfies it more completely than all

things else. Holiness is not merely an entity in the soul by itself. It has a necessary connection with God and with the beings he has created, and cannot exist without that connection. There are celestial glories that begin and end, and consequently they possess only a subordinate worth, but holiness will never end and will never lose its central place. God is a being of infinite perfections, and yet we must admit that the divine holiness has a worth which does not belong to any other of the divine attributes. It is this which gives character to the whole nature of God, and which makes him to stand out before the universe as Infinite Love. Might would be right if it were not for goodness. "Power is God's hand and arm; omniscience his eye; mercy his bowels; eternity his duration; holiness his beauty." There is no quality which conducts us so quickly to God as holiness. There are excellencies which compel us to take a vast circuit before they bring us to the First Fair, but with holiness we are face to face with God. Holiness is heaven. "There may be palms of triumph; there may be crowns of unfading lustre; there may be pavements of emerald, and rivers of pleasure, and groves of surpassing loveliness, and palaces of delight, and high arches in heaven which ring with sweetest

melody—but, mainly and essentially, it is a moral glory which is lighted up there; it is virtue which blooms and is immortal there; it is the goodness by which the spirits of the holy are regulated here, it is this which forms the beatitude of eternity. The righteous now, who, when they die and rise again, shall be righteous still, have heaven already in their bosoms; and when they enter within its portals, they carry the very being and substance of its blessedness along with them—the character which is itself the whole of heaven's worth, the character which is the very essence of heaven's enjoyments.* We are taught to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." This gives us the fundamental conception of heaven. The persons there do God's will. The law of God is the law of heaven, and there is no heaven unless that law is kept. Holy character, therefore, is the perfection of heaven.

* Chalmers, Sermon on "Heaven a Character and not a Locality."

CHAPTER III.

THE SAVED ARE BLESSED WITH GREAT POWER.

THE instant a good soul enters eternity it will be the subject of a great awakening. The transition from the world of sense to the world of spirit is so great that the mind is aroused in the whole circle of its being. It seems as if real life had just appeared. Every wheel of the soul is intense with energy. Power in each faculty is now understood as it never was understood before. There is all the freshness and clearness of a new revelation. The saved immortal has such a knowledge of himself as to wonder whether he is the same being who an hour before was dying. Hidden treasures of the soul have just come within the range of consciousness: that discovery sends a quickening force through and through the mind. The sense of power, however, is not bewildering, not impetuous. It is rather like the silent power of worlds in motion; like the movement of the angel's wing that is never heard; like the self-contained energy of God

that has no jar. This newly awakened activity is simply the beginning of heaven. It is the first breath of the eternal morning; the initial revival of paradise; the inspiring salutation of the life that is everlasting. One is prepared by it for what is to come; set in an attitude for the infinite good; girding up the loins for the journey of ages. The fact that God is the all-embracing reality in heaven, makes it certain that there will be a great increase of power by the continuous flow of *divine energy* into the soul. The finite spirit and the Infinite are there so blended together in harmony that supernatural communications are the necessary result of that union. There are thousands of tendencies in the human soul which branch off from the intellect, heart, and will, and possibly thousands more which are not accounted for by these faculties, and to have such a nature immersed in God is power to the full measure of capacity. Then, too, when such a mind is active as well as receptive, so that the Supreme Being becomes the chief object of contemplation, there is intensity of soul from the knowledge we have gained respecting God.

Besides the fact of divine immanence, which in its highest sense is peculiar to heaven, there are powers great and manifold waiting with

eagerness the advent of the soul into paradise. The world of glory with its grand system of materialism, the wonderful forms of life that will be seen for the first time, the angelic hosts who have dwelt there from the beginning of days, the countless throng of saints who have come there from all the nations, the royal strangers who may be visiting the capital from distant planets, the wondrous work and worship of the entire celestial company, the law and government of that divine realm, the Son of God in the midst of splendor as the central object,—these will thrill the soul with the loftiest kind of inspiration.

It should be noted also that *sight* and *insight*, instead of faith, will characterize ransomed men. By this means every external power will strike the mind with full force. There are energies that reach us but faintly in our present state, and energies that never reach us at all because there is no channel for them. When once we enter the land of open vision our whole being shall be transformed and electrified. In a sense beyond our present reckoning we shall see all things in God, and see God in all things. We are very much like children who have always lived in a deep extended mine, knowing nothing of the upper world experimentally with its fields and

flowers, its seas and cities, and its far-away sunsets which herald the night and the coming of the stars.

There will no doubt be a *new language* for the sons of God in heaven, and that new language will fit precisely the sanctified mind. There is not a single dialect of universal man that is suited to express every phase of the human spirit. Words may be shaped and linked together in the best way possible, and yet certain movements of the soul will not be expressed with clearness. A vast amount of confusion and debate has resulted from the imperfection of language. Words may be lighted up by metaphor, having about them music, rhythm, and ethereal power, and yet not be the proper vehicle to carry the treasures of the mind. There are words which pass current as pure gold and are supposed to bear the image and superscription of spiritual qualities, but when carefully examined they have neither the true weight nor the true character. If we could know all that pertains to heaven, we could not put that knowledge into human speech. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that there should be some high language, divine in its nature, which will be a perfect medium of communication between the saints in heaven; a language that can

take the contents of the soul and tell just what they are, and that will be a fit instrument for expressing the excellencies of the upper world and the glories of the Eternal God. Gifted with such a language, it can easily be seen how the whole being of redeemed man will be energized and made to press forward with all the alacrity of the burning seraphim.

Looking now into the soul itself, a very great power is its *immaculate purity*. A holy nature is power concentrated; dynamic life through and through. Even upon earth we notice how vital godliness arouses the mind that had been sleeping for years; changes the very countenance, and presents to the world a new man. How much greater will be the effect when character is complete, and but one energy reigns in the soul! The potency of righteousness will never be idle in the midst of retired bliss, but rather giving tone and tendency to all that is done. There will be a singleness of aim to the immaculate spirit that will express the sum of its power.

The creative faculty will also hold up before the mind *finished ideals*, and these will stimulate it by their brilliancy and perfection. Men in general are not aware of the power which belongs to a cultivated and pure imagination,

just because that faculty is so wayward in the present life. In the heavenly state it will be a source of exalted inspiration. Its inventive power will open up avenues of thought and goodness. It will brighten and beautify objects, and will exert a queenly influence over the faculties. It will in certain cases be more penetrating than the understanding; anticipating truth before logic has reached the end of its chain. Its ideals will charm and cheer the mind. These will not form a kind of fairy land where the soul will dream away its moments; but the ideal will become real with all the speed of the quickened spirit.

The *perfect memory* of the saved soul will be a great power. In the operations of the human mind nothing is ever lost. Our thoughts and feelings which we had yesterday may be forgotten to-day, but remembered to-morrow, showing that they were not destroyed. There is a vast amount of knowledge treasured up in the mind of which the person is not aware, and it will continue to be hidden until the proper occasions lift it into the light. All men are greater than they appear; possibly many are worse than they appear; perhaps some are better than they appear. The realm that is concealed is more extended than the realm that is revealed. Memory in the future

state will be clear, minute, and retentive. That millions of things can be remembered with ease will add force to the intellect, the emotions, and the will. The entire mind will be a kind of luminous energy, quick and comprehensive. Such views will not seem like speculations when it is considered that men have remembered what they read, heard, and saw, and that illiterate persons in high fever have spoken in foreign languages, which no one ever heard them speak while in health. Even the insane and persons asleep have astonished spectators by manifestations of knowledge which no one imagined they possessed. Such feats of memory here, suggest what may be expected hereafter. Even the wicked will find the books opened on the great day of judgment, compelled to read page after page of their mental history.

It is a question whether a perfect memory would be a gain to fallen beings in a world like the present; whether the soul would not be petrified by the vision of itself, and thus unmanned for the incumbent duties of life. The fact that we are in a state of probation makes it necessary that every force, whether of nature or of grace, should just go so far, and then stop. One might be paralyzed by a multitude of objects striking the mind;

annihilating as it were its spontaneity and freedom. A merciful probation carried forward in such a way would be changed into a punitive system; spirits would be doomed and darkened in the midst of noon-day light, and overwhelmed by the steady glaring at their sin and guilt.

The *intellectual life* of heaven may now be noticed. That intellectual life will fill the mind. The immortal spirit will seem like the angel standing in the sun. Clearness will make the objects of thought to assume their proper place, form, and character. There will be a sense of ease in the working of the mind which was never felt during the most favored moments of time, and a quickness of apprehension that is peculiar to the heavenly state. Great sections of truth will be struck off with unusual rapidity; this in marked contrast with certain strained efforts in the present life. Many a time we put forth our entire strength so as to reach a thought, and yet do not reach it. A feeling may arise of great value, and we may do our best to express it, but we fail. Thus we are hampered, and our total self-hood does not come forth. We are not complete men, but men in a state of partial captivity. President Edwards had an experience of this kind. He says, "The inward ardor of my soul

seemed to be hindered and pent up, and could not freely flame out as it would. I used often to think, how in heaven this principle should freely and fully vent and express itself.”* Something like intuition will characterize certain acts of the understanding; this power aiding and hastening the logical process. The soul will have movements which will make one think of divine attributes; imaging these as far as the finite spirit can do so. It may grasp many things at once, instead of by the slow process of one thing at a time.

What may be called the *continuity* of intellectual life will be a new feature of the eternal state, opening up realms of truth that never could be opened up here. Our working day is short, and each night we must rest. But in the kingdom of pure life and thought there will be no night. The liberated spirit can move onward with no break. Studies can be entered upon and finished, as it were, at one sitting, whether the time be a week, month, or year. There may be themes which will take a century to unfold, but such continuity will not be tiresome. The mind will seem rather to be in its true element; delighted all the way until the end, and doubly delighted when the finished good stands forth in its presence.

* “Life,” prefixed to his Works, p. 18.

Man while upon earth is hemmed in by limitations. What an enlargement there will be when he can expatiate in a wider sphere, and when no impediment shall hinder him in all his course.

It falls to us now to consider how *heavenly corporeity* increases the power of mind. The fact that redeemed souls shall possess bodies "like unto Christ's glorious body," is an intimation that notable perfections will characterize them. To whatever uses the future body will be put, it will have complete adaptation to the soul; never a hindrance, but always a help. Just what will be its component parts we do not know. The glorified body may be composed of the one elementary substance; indestructible, simple in structure, fitted for all worlds, and marvellous in power. The human form will be retained: Adam had it: Christ has it. Still what may be the variations of perfect corporeity we cannot tell. The human type may be preserved in the midst of great modifications. The Redeemer in glory is different from the Redeemer in a state of humiliation. The fact that the celestial body is to be the instrument and habitation of the soul forever, makes it probable that it will have a multiplicity of characteristics that are not found in the earthly body. Instead of five

senses, there may be fifty. Each sense, whether new or old, will possess great power. The eye may be able to detect the most remote and the most minute objects with equal ease and fulness, and the ear may catch sounds that never reach us here. New properties of matter will be perceived by new senses. The future body may even contain excellencies which at first are latent, but which in years to come leap forth, having found the objects for which they were fitted.

As "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," there must be many parts of our earthly body which never can be reproduced in the one that is heavenly. These parts were but for a time, and so when they answered their purpose they disappeared. It is fair to think also that there are tendencies, tastes, feelings, and propensities of the soul that are temporary in their nature. They are suited to this world, but are not adapted to the world of life. Possibly, however, some of these early characteristics may shoot up into original forms of development, doing a work that was necessary in the wondrous kingdom of the future.

To a thoughtful person it even seems that the earth and the air are two volumes of human history, as if each word and act of uni-

versal man had been printed there, needing only eyes of requisite power to read the writing. The sounds even which have issued forth from mortal creatures, whether of joy or sorrow, may all be stored up as in one great instrument, waiting for the advent of some bright to-morrow when they may be heard. The wonders of the phonograph suggest as much as that. "It seems also that *photographic* influence pervades all nature. It may imprint upon the world around us our features, as they are modified by various passions, and thus fill nature with daguerreotype impressions of all our actions that are performed in daylight. It may be that there are tests by which nature, more skilfully than any human photographer, can bring out and fix those portraits, so that acuter senses than ours shall see them, as on a great canvas, spread over the material universe. Perhaps, too, they may never fade from that canvas, but become specimens in the great picture gallery of eternity."*

The spiritual body will no doubt have such lightness and force that it can fly from world to world, thus enabling the soul to behold the wonders of the Almighty. The stimulus proceeding from it will excite the mind. The glorified body may be a suggestive organ,

* Hitchcock, "Religion of Geology," p. 426.

making the laws of association to work with quickness, and thus aiding the memory and brightening the imagination. It may even be so constituted as to be an epitome of the material creation, a kind of treasury for the soul, the voice and music of the spirit. Energy will be at its height each moment, and the tendency will be to hasten forward on rapid wing. The soul will evidently be enlarged and quickened by its possession of a perfect body, having also a class of emotions and thoughts of a high order, which never could arise in a mind that was separated from matter.

When the heightened power of redeemed man is considered, it will need *principle* of the strongest kind to control it. As it respects the power of the celestial body, it must be regulated by a well-balanced mind. Its native fire left to itself might burn with such intensity as to consume the physical organism. No doubt the mere exercise of power in the body is pleasant, and just for that reason it must be guided. Though the movement of physical life is under law, and there can be no danger from it, yet the *impelling* power, like energy in general, is of itself blind, and must be controlled by a spirit back of it. Power can be a faithful servant if it has a faithful master.

The body, however, is not the only part that needs to be watched. The enhanced power of the soul, by reason of its connection with the body, demands a governing principle. Mind viewed abstractly also is power, but if it is not properly directed it becomes dangerous. Even the divine omnipotence must be regulated by wisdom and goodness.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SAVED ARE BLESSED WITH CAPABILITIES OF ENDLESS PROGRESS.

It is sometimes asked, "Do you believe that there will be progress in heaven?" The persons who propose this question seem to think that inasmuch as the saints are holy and happy, no change can pass over them forever: being *perfect* ends the matter. There is an impression that to speak of progress in those who are redeemed is to cast a slight upon the Redeemer; as if they still needed something done for them after they are *saved*. It is therefore considered better to view the men of heaven as lifted up to the summit of being at once, and fixed there in the midst of glory forever, the soul being rounded out to a fulness which admits of no addition.

There is a species of mysticism about this view. It leads one almost to think of Brahminical pantheism, when the soul at last drops into the Infinite Blessedness and can go no farther. As far as moral perfection is con-

cerned it is eternal. But as saved men are finite their perfection is not absolute. Growth is a characteristic of all creaturely minds, and it is not possible to fix a point when it will stop. The instant a soul reaches heaven its holiness is perfect in *kind*, and yet in *degree* it will expand forever. The attempt to set aside endless progress by any transcendental perfection is contrary to both reason and Scripture. The *man* Christ Jesus was sinless at the beginning and sinless all the way through, but at the *end* he had a greater amount of holiness than he had at the beginning. He wrought out *habits* of righteousness. These had no place in his character at first; so that he was stronger in goodness when he died, than when he began to live. If this was the case with the Sinless Saviour, it is surely no less the case with the sinless saints. Their pure habits will be vastly stronger at the end of a million of years, than they were at the end of the first year in heaven. Character also will have more *worth*.

Dr. Duff, the distinguished missionary, had a striking dream when he was young. "He dreamed, as he lay on the banks of a stream, that there shone in the distance a brightness surpassing that of the sun. By-and-bye from the great light there seemed to approach him a magnificent chariot of gold, studded with

gems, and drawn by fiery horses. The glory overawed him. At last the heavenly chariot reached his side, and from its open window the Almighty God looked out and addressed to him, in the mildest tones, the words, '*Come up hither; I have work for thee to do.*' Such a call was a fitting commencement of Alexander Duff's career." * In a higher sense God says to each saint at death, "Come up hither; I have work for thee to do."

There is reason to think that all the virtues will find a field of action in eternity, so that progress will characterize each one of them. Not only will there be a place for justice and truthfulness, reverence and gratitude, but opportunities will be found for the exercise of patience and forbearance, fortitude and compassion. In some part of the divine empire there may be a class of beings who need our sympathy and assistance. Perhaps they are on trial and are just on the verge of giving way, but by our presence among them and words of encouragement they are enabled to stand fast for righteousness. The graces which we have cultivated upon earth and our training while here, may give us just the fitness we need for work among certain of the populations of distant worlds. Whether any

* "Life," vol. i., p. 13. New York ed.

other creatures have sinned besides angels and men we do not know. If there should be such fallen beings, we might be sent to minister to them just as the angels of God minister to us. It would not be necessary that Christ should go among them and die. The one infinite atonement would be sufficient. They would simply need a strong faith when the story of redemption is published to them. But even if there is no ground for this speculation, there may be orders of intelligence who would be vastly benefited by our labors in their behalf. The lowest might be lifted up by our influence, and the highest might be made still higher by our communications.

There may be a course of action that is *extraordinary* that will call out the soldier saints of heaven. Although no created intelligence can ever perform works of supererogation, yet works that are somewhat daring and only necessary during a great emergency may be performed by saved men. The redemptive work of Christ might suggest the possibility of such a lofty style of action. Of course that redemptive work stands alone, being out of the range of the highest creaturely ability—still it may furnish a hint of some unusual kind of action that will be necessary during a crisis in the affairs of immortality. To walk

in the footsteps of Christ as far as the noblest of his followers can venture, even by taxing their nature, would seem to be no more than what should be expected of men who have been saved by extraordinary means. There is inspiration and pleasure in undertaking what may be viewed as the highest deed of love; a love that is the fruit of the tree of life that was planted on Calvary. As there have appeared during the course of the Christian centuries heroes of the faith, so there may appear in heaven a class of monumental spirits, marking off noted periods in its history. Considering the great variety of talent in redeemed men, it is to be expected that the magnates will be sent upon some eventful mission suitable to their powers. It is not unlikely, however, that the rank and file will have obligations laid upon them of so peculiar a character that only they themselves can profitably manage them. There are ministries of lowliness that are high, and deeds performed in the darkness that are bright. Yea, there may be service so completely negative in its nature that to attend to it with sweetness and faithfulness will be worthy of great honor. It is just possible, therefore, that every saint in heaven will have the opportunity to *be* or to *do* something that is superlative, and that a

joy quite peculiar will be the experience of each one as the result of this.

The possessory principle has great power in the present life, but in heaven *money* is not known. Wealth is not needed there as a means of progress. This opens up an entirely new state of things. Education, civilization, religion, cannot be carried forward upon earth without wealth. Our development here is upon a low plane; it is preparatory; there is a great deal of scaffolding connected with it: the scaffolding is removed when the building is finished. The idea of possession in the celestial commonwealth will have a higher meaning than it has here. Ransomed men have truth, love, and God for their treasure. The possessory principle is perverted among earthly souls. The desire for gold is the desire for God misplaced. Men having lost the chief good, and restless because of this loss, they seize some inferior treasure to take the place of it.

Progress betokens a method. There is first the seed, the development of that seed, and the fruit as the end of all. This trinal method of progress is characteristic of all the kingdoms of life. The passage from the rudiments to the complete knowledge of a subject will be rapid in heaven. Progress at times will bound for-

ward as in the multiplication of numbers, rather than as in the addition of numbers. Not as ten and ten that make twenty, but as ten times ten that make a hundred.

Will not many saved souls have to go through a schooling before they can do much in the intellectual sphere of eternity? Assuredly infants and idiotic minds will need teachers. Those also who had just knowledge enough to admit them into the kingdom will need to be trained by higher spirits. It will be one of the interesting sights of heaven to behold companies of lowly creatures advancing under the tuition of saints and seraphs. Many who began thus so low may in the course of time go beyond those who had been more highly favored. "There is a legend of an artist, who was about to carve from a piece of costly sandal-wood an image of the Madonna; but the material was intractable—his hand seemed to have lost its skill—he could not approach his ideal. When about to relinquish his efforts in despair, a voice in a dream bade him shape the figure from the oak-block which was about to feed his hearth. He obeyed, and produced a masterpiece."* Who can tell but that the Divine Artist may yet shape out of some common mind a masterpiece. It

* Vaughan, "Hours with the Mystics," vol. ii., p. 156.

may be true in heaven as well as upon earth, that "the last shall be first, and the first last."

There may be *worlds* which have some *new* and *striking thought* of God to unfold, just as this *earth* has the new and striking thought of the *incarnation* and *redemption* of *Christ*. The Infinite Being has perfections that are entirely beyond our thinking, and information respecting some of these may be found in realms that were created for the very purpose of showing them forth. There may even be *universes* different from each other, and different from the one to which we belong, which unfold special characteristics of the Godhead. There may be *invisible* universes populous with lofty spirits; these lofty spirits mingling together in commonwealths that are quite peculiar and fitted to illustrate certain glories of the Deity. There may be systems of life that we cannot even imagine, yet absolutely necessary to unfold excellencies of God. Just at what point in the roll of eternal years we are to place the existing creations, no man can tell. A vast series of universes may have come, continued, and ended, one after the other, before ours was called into being. It is certain, at any rate, that God having begun to manifest himself, he must continue the

manifestation forever, because a Being who is limitless never can be fully revealed.

Age after age, cycle after cycle, the creaturely spirit will be making new attainments. Vast as the universe is, there will be a time when the contents of it will be mastered by the human mind. Millions of years will have to pass away before this point is reached; but the fact that the creation has a limit, while the soul has no limit to its development, makes it certain that every truth conveyed by it can be known. That will be a wondrous hour when all the starry systems can do no more for us. It would seem as if there must be a pause throughout the creation at that time. The wheels of creation would seem to slacken their speed, the suns shine with a fainter light as if their fires were going out, the voices of worlds dying away among the breathless constellations, and the night of disaster coming after the day that was so long and wonderful. Such must be the case, as far as we can read the record. The glorious universe must end; and this not merely from a necessity of the divine plans, but from the wearing out of the system itself. There are evidences of dissolution. Energy is dissipated, and finds a home in the universal ether. It would seem that in the far-off years planets will rush toward the

sun; world will strike against world, and system against system; the harmonies of creation will be broken up.

“All but an exceedingly small fraction of the light and heat of the sun and stars goes out into space and does not return to them again, or in other words, the sun and stars are slowly cooling. To restore to the sun every instant its losses by radiation, the whole celestial vault would have to radiate as powerfully as the sun does—in which case the earth and the planets would very soon acquire (at their surfaces) the sun’s temperature. In the next place, the visible motion of the large bodies of the universe is gradually being stopped by something which may be denominated ethereal friction.” “It is absolutely certain that life, so far as it is physical, depends essentially upon transformations of energy; it is also absolutely certain that age after age the possibility of such transformations is becoming less and less; and, so far as we yet know, the final state of the present universe must be an aggregation (into one mass) of all the matter it contains.”*

Destruction is certainly a characteristic of our earthly system. Whole races perished during the pre-Adamite ages by the rising and

* Stewart and Tait, “The Unseen Universe,” pp. 165, 127.

falling of the earth's crust. "Twenty or more sweeping destructions occurred," says Prof. Dana, "besides other partial ones, on this continent after the appearance of animal life, and a larger number in Europe." Then the fact that creatures devour each other, and the other appalling fact that every living thing dies. Note also the destruction of property and life by tempests on sea and land, by earthquakes and volcanoes, by fire and flood. If every kind of destruction on this globe is considered, it will be found to be exceedingly great. "The earth itself and the works that are therein shall be burned up." No doubt much of the destruction connected with our planet is the result of sin; but even if that is counted out, enough remains to show that destructions are a peculiarity of the created system with its law of change.

We now reach the thought, that after the present universe has ended its mission and been destroyed, a new universe will be formed out of its ruins, higher in every sense, in order to meet the advanced experience of holy beings. This new universe may contain such wondrous manifestations of God that it will continue through numberless years, meeting stage after stage of mental and moral progress. Still there must be a time when the lesson will

be learned perfectly : then a change once more will be needed. The universe, however, may have been so arranged as to have no tendency towards destruction ; consequently the changes needed will be gradual in world after world till the whole has been remodelled ; the divine manifestations thus brightening in splendor toward the noon that is never to be reached. Whatever may be the methods of God, change and progress will be eternal.

Universal providence will be one of the great studies of the endless future, and will have an important bearing on the march of souls. What a circle of providence that must be which grasps the entire created system with all its relations, and that through uncounted ages ! Thoughts will come forth with reference to it of such weight and originality as to cause the mind to leap in its progress, appealing to every faculty in the most healthy manner, and causing delight to flow through them all. Souls thus charmed and intensified by the growing wonders of the divine administration will be constrained to cry out, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints."

Take now a *history* of the *entire universe* : how our little histories sink out of sight beside that. The variety of incidents that must be

noticed. The striking nature of many of these. The results that work out in the course of centuries. The influence that goes from mind to mind. The great periods and epochs in the march of the history. The laws which govern the whole process. The kingly spirits that appear at different times. The bearing of one world's history upon the other parts of the universe. Whether there is a single thought amidst the universal movement that towers above all others and to which they all tend, or whether there are several chief thoughts that stand out as pyramids on the plains of immensity. Then the relation of the collective history to the purposes of God, and the particular divine manifestations that are meant to be seen by the creatures. Thus the whole ending in a sublime philosophy of history.

Our progress at any point of eternity will show the capacity of the soul at that point to behold God. If the whole of our knowledge and goodness is collected together at the end of countless ages—that knowledge and goodness as expressing the totality of our development will be the measure of our conception of the Deity. The time will come in the far-off future when *one soul* shall know as much and enjoy as much as *all* the inhabitants of heaven did know and enjoy at some fixed

period of the past. The expansion of the creaturely spirit goes away beyond all reckoning. All we can say is, that the finite will be approaching the Infinite forever. The course of the soul through the endless years of heaven is a course of developed perfections; and when these perfections at any time are headed up and brought to unity, then is the soul prepared, as with a mightier telescope than it had before, to survey some new star in the wondrous firmament of God.

CHAPTER V.

THE SAVED ARE BLESSED WITH THE COMPANY OF NOBLE BEINGS.

It is necessary to caution the reader as we enter upon the studies of the present chapter. There is a heated interest respecting the friendships of heaven. Persons are charmed by what is merely human. They consequently forget the chief elements of paradise. Heaven is made a sentimental world. The natural affections are allowed to have supreme control. The ties which bind us here are to bind us there forever. The kingdom of glory is simply a vast collection of homes. Our caution, then, is this, Do not press the relations of life too far. The human will not be lost, and yet it will be greatly modified in the realm of spirits. The fancies of Swedenborg seem to have entered certain minds, and so they are thinking of marriages that are spiritual and eternal. "We must be careful," remarks Richard Baxter, "that we look not for that in the saints which is to be found only in Christ, and that

we expect not too great a part of our comfort in the fruition of their society." Just how much of the human is to be left behind we do not know. Substantially we are to be the same beings that we are now; only certain preparatory characteristics are to be stripped from us. Many things are necessary upon earth that are not necessary in heaven.

Shall we know persons in glory by *intuition* that we never knew here? Can we say at once, There is Joshua, there is Luther, there is Howard? The language of certain writers implies as much as this. They tell us that the three apostles knew Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration. The inference is, that they knew them *directly*. There is no evidence of that. The apostles may have gained the information from the two heavenly men, or the Saviour may have mentioned their names. To know persons at first sight in heaven, whom we never knew on earth, would require a miracle. The most reasonable way of looking at the matter is to believe that those who were utter strangers to each other must become acquainted. This fact of becoming acquainted will constitute one of the joys of heaven. Persons that were far apart in nationality and time will meet together and form new attachments.

Shall we not instantly recognize our *friends* in the future life? It must be understood that when the saints enter heaven they enter a world of *souls*. In what way do souls communicate with each other? No man can tell. In the present life mind reaches mind through the medium of the body. We are never conscious of the substance of the soul: we only know of its existence by its working. How, then, does one disembodied spirit recognize another disembodied spirit? Certain writers have supposed that between death and the resurrection the soul has a temporary body given to it, and so through that medium one heavenly being comes in contact with another. There is not sufficient evidence to establish this view. Must friends, then, be left in ignorance of each other? That does not follow. The mere fact that we cannot point out the *way* of communication between souls, does not prove that there is no way. Angels are spirits, and they know each other. The good angels know the bad, and the bad the good; and both classes know human souls, and act upon them. This makes it evident that there is a way by which one soul can know another, although we cannot tell *how* it is done.

The question, however, remains: Will one friend recognize another friend the *instant*

they meet? We have not light enough to answer the question. Possibly a moment's interchange of thought may be needed before one person can know the other. Even when the soul is clothed with the glorified body, friend may not detect friend at once: a word or motion may be needed. Such slight impediment at the beginning is really nothing. After the uncertain moment is past, the recognition is a blessed reality forever. With the limitations mentioned, it may be taken as an accepted truth that friends will know each other in heaven, and be exceedingly happy in each other's company. The language of the Apostle Paul runs in that direction: "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy."

Think of the infants who have entered heaven. They smiled, suffered, died, and then lived forever. They were a kind of unknown voyagers entering the sea of time, and then the sea of eternity. The sun of earth just rose upon them, and then they winged their flight to the country of eternal peace. A feeling of awe creeps over us as we think of them. They seem like voices that echoed on our ear from the summer land of God; like angels

who made us a visit in the garb of mortals, and then went away when we were making arrangements to entertain them; like flowers that came forth on the first days of spring, but a sudden cold nipped them, and they bowed their head and died. It would seem as if these young immortals must have *something* about them which will proclaim the fact that they were infants when they entered the kingdom of glory. By this means they would be quickly known as a *class*, while as individuals they would have to be discovered just as we discover others.

It is not unlikely that *certain men* may have *marks* which furnish a hint as to their *identity*. Adam and Eve, as we suppose they were saved by faith, may have characteristics which show that they were the first parents of the race: the only persons who were first holy, then sinful, then holy forever. Abel, as a member of the first family, as the first martyr, and as the first soul that entered heaven, might have that about him which suggests who he is. The book of Revelation informs us that the city of God has "twelve foundations, and in them the *names* of the twelve apostles of the Lamb," perhaps intimating that those favored men have peculiarities which point them out. We learn also that the writer of the same book

“saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God,” thus finely hinting that they were known as witnesses for Christ. Even a few far-reaching words that were spoken on earth may be spoken in heaven. These thoughts may have a degree of probability from the fact that the Jewish people never lose the characteristics of their race. There may be some hymn with its music that was dear to us here, and that hymn may be chanted some day on the hill-sides of glory. That “they sing the song of *Moses* and the Lamb” may bear out such a view. As when we have been in some garden full of rich odors the fragrance lingers with us after we have left it, so when we leave the gardens of earth for those of heaven some sweet perfume may tarry with us.

Do the spirits of the departed return to the earth that they may minister to its people? According to the religion of sentimentalism they do come back. In funeral sermons this view is sometimes advocated: pretty words can be spoken in favor of it. How deeply affecting to have a sainted mother return to her family of orphan children! caring for them when they are exposed to danger, and inspiring them with hope that they may not falter by the way. She comforts them in their dis-

tress, points them to the sunny land that has no night, and at the hour of death accompanies them to their home beyond the stars. She is more faithful now than she was before, because sin does not check her and weariness does not hinder her in her mission of love. However captivating this may be to the feelings and the imagination, the current of Scripture is against it. What we have to do for our friends must be done while living upon earth. "The night cometh when no man can work." At the final judgment "every one receives the things done in his *body*, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." If the souls of the righteous may come to this earth in order to save men, it does not take long to reach the thought that they also may go to perdition in order to save those who are there. Future probation is thus the outcome of this fancy. That glorified saints *pray* for us is simply a phase of the same idea, and that we should pray to them to aid us, makes it evident that we are on the same track of thinking.

The following passage is cited as proof that the spirits of the departed minister to men: "I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I

am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets." It is supposed that the angel mentioned here was one of the ancient prophets. But that is not the meaning of the language. The Revised Version makes it plain: "I am a fellow servant with *thee*, and with *thy brethren* the prophets." The angel did not belong to the prophetic race. He was simply a servant of God along with them. That the souls of the good are *angels*, or that they are *ministering spirits*, is not the teaching of Scripture.

Are the saints in heaven cognizant of what is transpiring upon this earth? It is stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews that "we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses." "A close-pressed cloud-like multitude of spectators," says Delitzsch, "is seated and watching us on either side." It is not certain that the language will bear this interpretation. The heroic men to whom the passage refers were witnesses *for the truth*, and *not witnesses of us*. Ransomed souls can have no direct vision of the earth. They may, however, learn much respecting its affairs from the angels, and also from the new saints who are ever coming among them. That there is "joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" shows that the redeemed gain knowledge relating to this earth. There is no doubt great

interest among the celestial inhabitants in regard to the extension of the divine kingdom.

Although the Bible gives no countenance to the ministry of souls, it does give countenance to the ministry of angels. Whether each pious man has his guardian angel or not we cannot say; but we can say that angels do guard pious men. "He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." Some of the ancients believed that around those whom the gods loved a cloud was thrown to protect them in time of danger. The good who were inside of this cloud could look through it and see those who would injure them; but the peculiarity of it was, that the enemies who were outside could not see them: they were thus safely sheltered. This interesting thought may symbolize the care which God extends to his people. The idea has been advanced that angels originally inhabited a certain planet; part of their number sinned, and as a punishment were cast down to hell; others remained holy, and as a reward were taken to heaven. They are thus living in what may be called their *future state*, just as men from this earth will be in their future state after death. There is no evidence for this view. Heaven was the original dwelling-place of the angels. There some of them fell,

and were cast out; and there some continued holy, and so were allowed to remain in their native country. The latter "are now ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

The friendships of heaven will not be confined to redeemed men. The fact that angels bore a part in their salvation will make them favored companions. Questions will be asked them touching their disinterested labors; and as scene after scene is recounted, wonder will be expressed, attachment strengthened, and thankfulness called forth. Self-denial would seem to be a feature of angelic love. It must have been a trial to pure spirits to behold so much of evil. They had to toil age after age amidst the darkness and depravity of fallen angels as well as of fallen men. Nothing but a passion of benevolence could bear them up.

The cementing principle of heavenly fellowship is *oneness*. This oneness is perfect in its nature, constant in its exercise, and universal as including all the inhabitants of heaven. The unity of the material creation cannot equal the unity of sinless beings. There is a degree of friction in the former, but not in the latter. The one will finally come to an end because of this friction, while the other will

continue forever. The union which characterizes the celestial orders is the reflection of that union which appertains to the Godhead, and it seems intended to illustrate that before the intelligent universe. Of course the oneness of souls can never equal the oneness of the divine persons, but it may be approaching that through endless time. It is the glory of celestial friendships that they become stronger forever. The communion, therefore, of mind with mind is always fresh, and always struck upon a higher key of delight.

The oneness of *men* in heaven has certain peculiarities. There is the *race* feeling, which angels do not possess. The angels stand off in singleness, having no organic relation of one with the other. They were created as distinct personalities. Men were born, have a common life, and the human race are in a sense one. The fact also that this entire race fell because of the first sin of the first man, shows that there is a marked difference between men and angels. Whatever phases of humanity may be dropped, the saints never can forget their Adamic origin. Besides this race connection, there is a redemptive connection with Christ. This gives us a new humanity.

The sight of the collective company of saved

men must be exceedingly delightful to the angelic tribes, and must prompt them to enter into the most endearing friendships with such favored souls. The fact is even made known to us that the angels are greatly benefited by the presence of the saints among them. The learned Apostle strikes off the thought, that "unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." The Church of the redeemed is the medium of divine manifestation to these exalted intelligences. They are enabled to make certain discoveries of the glory of God, which could not be made except through this channel. The question naturally arises just here, whether the angels are an order of beings superior to the saints, or whether *the saints are higher than the angels*.

The angels are a class of unfallen beings. They have continued in a state of holiness for thousands of years. Their development must have been rapid and extended because of their purity. How can men who have been crippled by sin ever outrun "the faire folk of God"? Besides, angels have great power. One of them "smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand." Man can do nothing like that. We read also that man was made "a little lower than the angels."

That would seem to settle the point of his inferiority. But the literal translation of the passage is this, "Thou hast made him but little lower than *God*." The comparison is not between man and the angels, but between *man* and *God*. Every thing is heightened now, and we see the reasonableness of the following verse—"Thou hast crowned him with *glory* and *honor*." "Although the angel is the more powerful spirit, man's spirit is nevertheless the richer and the more comprehensive."* There are animal races which have powers which no human being can claim, but yet no one will venture to say that man is inferior to the animal.

It is significant that the Son of God was not to be divine-angelic, but divine-*human*; and equally significant that we are not only "*conquerors*," but "*more than conquerors* through him that loved us." The possibilities of human nature are greater than we usually think. We do not grasp the being of man as God grasps it, and do not know the eternal unfoldings of that being as he knows it. Henry Melvill, in his sermon on "Heaven," uses this language: "I have the highest possible thoughts in regard to the future dignity of man. I believe not that he will be second

* Martensen, "Christian Dogmatics," p. 132.

to any but God. I would not change his place, I would not barter his crown, for that of the noblest, the first, amongst the angels of heaven. For no nature has been brought into so intimate a relation to the divine as the human: God has become man, and man therefore, we believe, must stand nearest to God. It may then be, seeing that, beyond question, there will be order throughout eternity, a gradation of ranks, a distribution of authority, that the saints will be princes in the kingdom of God; that through them will the Almighty be pleased to carry on much of his government; and that angels, who are ‘ministering spirits’ to them during their moments of probation, will attend them as their messengers during their ages of triumph.”

A *new revelation of God* is made in redemption, brighter than that which is made in the creation. The divine trinity and the divine mercy burst forth in their glory by reason of the plan of salvation, while the power, wisdom, and goodness of God appear in a new light. “The angels desire to look into these things,” showing that “the riches of grace in Christ Jesus” are to them full of interest, and demanding the most careful study. The fact also that the God-man is the centre of heaven is a truth of wondrous significance. *Man* does

seem to be lifted up to the highest plane of existence because of his connection with the *God-man*.

The saints in glory have characteristics which the angels do not possess. Their experience which has been gained from sin, trial, temptation, truth, and the working of the Holy Spirit, is a great experience. They have a new kind of humility and faith, a new kind of love and thankfulness, a new kind of praise and hope; and as growing out of these, a new kind of obedience. They have views, feelings, and actions with reference to God and the *God-man* that the angels cannot have. The redemptive life in souls has a quality that is superior to the natural life of the angels. As the Saviour struck out a course of benevolence that was the highest in the system of God, so the actions of perfected men have a might and majesty because they are the result of that benevolence. The saints may therefore be higher than the angels. Redeemed humanity is elevated at every point. Even if we admit that the saints will be lower for a time, yet in the course of ages they may be higher. The eternal exaltation of redeemed men is closely connected with the eternal exaltation of the Redeemer, and as a consequence they must have a greatness which does not

belong to the angels. The glory of the saved is the glory of the Saviour.

There is a bond of union between Christ and all ransomed souls that does not exist between Christ and the angels. He is "the head over all things to the *Church*, which is his *body*, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." We are spoken of as *joint heirs* with Christ, intimating that the redeemed and the Redeemer have one common inheritance. "Christ's faithful servants," remarks Dr. Payson, "shall sit and reign with him upon his throne,—an honor in which it is nowhere intimated that any of the angels shall share. Indeed, the disciples of Christ are in a peculiar sense his members, and as such they will largely share in all the honors, and dignities, and glories, of their exalted head. It is doubtless in virtue of this free, intimate, and peculiar relation to him, that they will, as an apostle assures us, judge the world, and even judge angels." We have the surprising language: "*All are yours*; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." The exalted unity of the saved and the Saviour is amazing, and seems as if it could not be true; and yet he says, "The *glory* which thou gavest me, *I have given them*; that they all may be *one*, even as *we are one*." While it is true that we have no right to lessen the standing of the

angels, it is equally true that we have no right to lessen the standing of redeemed men. If we lower the position of saints, we cast dishonor upon the Saviour. "Angels are the Imperial Guard, doing easy duty at home. We are the Tenth Legion, marching in from the swamps and forests of the far-off frontier; scarred and battered, but victorious over death and sin."* If the choice were given to me, I had rather be a man redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, than an angel who needed no redemption.

* Hitchcock, "Eternal Atonement," p. 13.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SAVED ARE BLESSED WITH PURE JOY.

Joy springs from the perfect activity of the mind. "The feeling of life freely progressing is happiness; true blessedness is godliness in love to God." Although the joy of saints is of great compass, it must always be proportioned to the state and circumstances of the soul; for if it is heightened to excess the tendency will be to seek for it as a chief good. Happiness even when purest is secondary. It has not the same value as knowledge and goodness. Its smile makes work to be easier, but it has not the masculine quality of diligence. We may concentrate all the energies of the soul in order to gain the greatest amount of holiness, but we dare not do that in order to gain the greatest amount of happiness. There never can be too much of love, but there may be too much of pleasure. God might create a nature that would be satisfied with a small degree of happiness, but it is not so certain that he could create a nature that would

be satisfied with less holiness than that nature could contain. Delightful emotion is a sovereign gift, and it might be modified as infinite wisdom saw fit, but righteousness has the stamp of eternity and cannot be changed.

I. JOY FROM THE ABSENCE OF PAIN.

Pain and sin are foreign to human nature as God created it. Sin, however, is worse than pain, because sin is called into being by a voluntary act, but pain is never chosen for its own sake. Pleasure is normal, but pain is abnormal. To contrast the miseries of time with the blessedness of eternity is to intensify that blessedness. The retrospective action of the saintly mind will be a characteristic of that mind forever, because by it there will always be suitable feelings welling forth towards the Infinite Deliverer. Saints tortured in the flames will have an ecstasy of joy as they enter among the glorified. Even the cross on which the God-man hung will be brought out into infinite prominence, as it stands in contrast with the countless multitudes saved by the one atoning death.

Whether the annihilation of *sin* or the annihilation of *misery* was the first that appeared in consciousness as the soul entered the eternal state, we do not know. Perhaps there was no

perceptible distinction of time between them; simply the realization of well-being in its completeness. However this may be, the fact that a once sinful man is now *saved* has vastly more in it than we are accustomed to attach to that word in common life. Every true believer upon earth can be spoken of as saved, yet that is not the same as the absolute salvation of heaven. In the one case, redemption is at work in the soul, and during a single day there may be relapses and repentings; but in the other case, the work is finished and redemption is needed no more.

II. JOY FROM THE SIMPLE ONGOING OF LIFE.

Just to exist is delightful. The soul is an organism, and that organism working in its own perfect way is happiness. If you will think of your body when in excellent health—food relished, sleep refreshing, and the feeling that you are lightsome and well—you will see that there is great pleasure in that state of things, and if your body were to express itself, it would say it was happy. The most elementary enjoyment is that which springs from the motion of life. The whole man, body and mind, is flourishing in the midst of gladness like the flowers and trees of heaven. There is a new sense of ability as if one could fly

with ease, and could execute plans with readiness. This consciousness of power thrills the soul, and lays a foundation for happiness. Love fills the entire being, and appears as a general feeling of good-will, prepared to go wherever God directs. Thankfulness exists as a state of mind, flowing round and round the purified spirit, eager to find an opening towards some person who had befriended the soul. "Gratitude is the memory of the heart." There is such a thing as having a grateful feeling without being conscious each moment of the one to whom gratitude is to be expressed. The emotions seem like waves of a heavenly ocean, rolling in gladness towards the shores of life and peace. All the graces come forth in princely array, as if the sinless spirit were a palace of glory. The intellect has light, the conscience law, the imagination ideals, the reason principles. There is a noble sense of freedom, the will completely willing, and joy coursing through it because of its obedience. The entire mind is a holy tendency, a habit of righteousness, stronger and better than simple innocence. The heavenly nature is theistic; the Deity abides in it as in a temple. Such a soul is "the river of God, which is full of water." According to the amount of power in the mind and the length

of time that power can be exerted, so is the happiness of that mind.

III. JOY FROM A STATE OF HARMONY.

Confusion never pleases. A single break in the harmony disturbs the mind, and will disturb it all the more if the harmony was the highest up to the point when the disharmony appeared. A cathedral complete with the exception of a flaw in the centre, will produce in a spectator mingled feelings of pleasure and pain, and the pain will be all the greater just because the flaw broke the harmony of splendid workmanship. If a painting is composed of a hundred figures, and the one that was intended to be the chief figure is not distinguished as such, the painting lacks unity, and so does not satisfy. Pain is the sign of disunion. The creation with its millions and millions of different things pleases the creaturely spirit, just because that creation is a *system*. If calculations could not be made in it with certainty, a feeling of dissatisfaction would be the result. "There is not any matter, nor any spirit, nor any creature, but is capable of unity of some kind with other creatures, and in that unity is its perfection and theirs, and a pleasure also for the beholding of all other creatures that can behold. So

the unity of spirits is partly in their sympathy, and partly in their giving and taking, and always in their love." * The mere thought of the celestial commonwealth with its works and ways in harmony, kindles joy in the soul. An object which calls forth all the faculties is one in which the mind can rest. When we have totality with unity we have the sweetest repose. As the blue sky with the white light all through it and the soft air underneath it is calm and serene, so the spirit of man abides in peace when in the midst of divine harmonies. Heaven is the highest order; and so the perfected soul is satisfied with the place and the circumstances, satisfied with the times and the seasons, satisfied with angels and men, satisfied with God and his government.

IV. JOY FROM THE NEW AND THE TRUE.

The Biblical revelations of the future life tell us of "a new heaven and a new earth," the "new Jerusalem" and the "new song." The new must be true in order to please, although the true may be old and yet satisfy. The radiance of eternity spreads over the true, and in a sense it is both new and old. The new attracts the mind by its freshness, stimulates the faculties, having about it a

* "Beauties" of Ruskin, p. 11.

pleasing warmth. Novelty and enjoyment are near of kin. Curiosity is a craving after the new, and so the new meets the want. As knowledge conditions man's development, it is suitable that there should be a desire for it. Wanting the new and the true will have a soundness and keenness in the pure spirits of heaven that cannot be found upon earth. No one will be wearied with eternal sameness. An infinite variety will mark the steps of the soul in its endless march, and this variety will not only characterize the realm of truth, but also the realm of emotion and action. New mental and material provinces will appear which at present we have no conception of, and new empires of life for which we have no name. We may rightly suppose also that the old will in many cases become new by reason of certain relations which demand it, as if the new were hidden in the old and must come forth when the occasion calls for it. It is even possible that things which skirted our daily life here and which we played with as of secondary importance, may start up on the fields of immortality in well-defined form, needed for some high mission. Articles at one time are thrown away as useless, which in after years are found to meet an emergency. There may be dreams of the soul that will be-

come real in the world of truth. Thus our infancy and manhood may meet together during some hour of the eternal day. The seed that was planted here may be found springing up in fruitfulness a million of years from this time.

V. JOY WHEN AN OBJECT SUGGESTS A TRAIN OF FINE THOUGHTS.

A single truth may of itself be a source of pleasure. The truth may be comprehensive and intricate, and may take hours and days to see through it; yet when once it is mastered, it stirs the soul to its lowest depths and creates a feeling of intense joy. I fully believe that there are single truths which will do vastly more for us in the line of development and happiness, than the multiplication of a certain class of ideas. Indeed, an array of facts may at times dampen and chill the mind. That was sound advice which Johnson gave to Boswell when he said, "Consolidate in your mind a firm and regular system of law, instead of picking up occasional fragments."* Hundreds of truths may be lodged in one principle. When the laws of association start a train of thoughts and make them circulate about the one topic which the intellect is considering, it

* "Life" of Johnson, vol. i., p. 302. New York ed.

seems like a fellowship meeting of friends; and the happiness awakened is in proportion to their number and value. Treasures hidden for years now come forth and surprise the mind. The soul seems to be larger and to contain more life by reason of the magnetic current of association. This suggestive power must have a great deal to do with the blessedness of the saints. It will be one of the quickening forces of eternity, and will tend to keep up that brightness and elasticity of spirit which have so much to do with its happiness. When we think of the experiences of heaven for a century or a thousand years, we can see what a gain it will be to have these recalled and made to mingle with some great thought that the mind is occupied with. We cannot perceive the full force of the point before us by looking at the working of association in the present life. In the glorified state this suggestive energy will be so perfect and have such a perfection of materials with which to work, that the felicity flowing from it will be exceedingly great and fine in its quality.

VI. JOY FROM HEAVEN VIEWED AS A GIFT.

No soul can take credit to itself that heaven is reached. The entire praise will be given to Eternal Goodness. That there is real worth

appertaining to those who have been saved by Christ is admitted. Holiness has an intrinsic value of its own. To whatever extent the excellencies of glorified saints will come forth during the ages of eternity they must have worth; yet inasmuch as this worth is the result of divine grace, it is relative in its nature. No one will ever lose sight of the fact that heaven is a gift. Heartfelt praise will ascend forever because of it.

Although all the redeemed are in heaven, the rewards differ as souls and actions differ. The penitent thief and the martyr Stephen cannot have the same volume of happiness. The missionary who toiled for a lifetime and the convert who died just after conversion, cannot be alike in their blessedness. Each vessel will be filled with joy, but each will differ in size. Then, too, the body has delightful sensations as well as the soul. It was man in his double nature that did good, and it is man in his double nature that receives a blessing. Equally also will pain strike through the body and soul of the wicked. Although celestial rewards are of grace, and not of debt, they are never bestowed in a way that is unreasonable. Our reward will not only be in proportion to what we *do*, but also in proportion to our state of mind as *wanting to do more*

or less in given circumstances. Our whole being and environment are taken into the account when God blesses us. There seems to be great wealth about the rewards of eternity, as if only in that way they could express the unsearchable riches of Christ. The rule is, *many* blessings for a *few* deeds of love—as if ten were rewarded by a hundred and a hundred by a thousand. God is pleased to heap great honors on ransomed men. Joy of the most exultant kind must find expression in view of the heavenly gift. “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

VII. JOY FROM WORSHIP RENDERED TO THE TRIUNE GOD.

As worship is the noblest act of the soul, the blessedness which springs from it must be the richest. All the tendencies, states, and aspirations of the saintly mind gather themselves together and form the crowning act of worship. This is the one act that is absolute; not a means to an end; worship is the end; the soul stops with that. We praise and adore God because he is worthy of praise and adoration. If we were to do these things because

of *some good that would result from them*, we should fail of rendering pure worship. Good will come to us from the act of worship, but we are not seeking for that: we simply are lost in the homage we pay to the Father who loved us, the Son who died for us, and the Spirit who sanctified us. As we began the Third Part with the blessed vision of the triune God, we end it with the blessed worship rendered to the triune God. Beholding the saintly and angelic tribes pavilioned in the midst of the glory of God and reflecting the light of his countenance, what a glow of feeling must thrill their hearts as their praises reach his ear! And if in the high devotions of the upper sanctuary there mingles the element of music, the raptures of emotion must be exceedingly great as the loud hallelujahs ring through the heavenly temple. There is no telling the joy that will fill the minds of those celestial worshippers as they praise the King of kings and Lord of lords. We only know that it will be the perfection of blessedness. We reach the end that is endless when we reach God. There being nothing beyond, we find ourselves at home, peaceful, contented, and very happy. "This satisfaction is nothing else but the repose of the soul amidst infinite delights; its peaceful acquiescence, hav-

ing attained the ultimate term of all its motions, beyond which it cares to go no further; the solace it finds in an adequate, full good; which it accounts enough for it, beyond which it desires no more; reckons its state as good as it can be, and is void of all hovering thoughts or inclination to change." Reaching this ideal state, the soul can say most heartily, "In thy presence is fulness of joy: at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

Thou immortal spirit, go on thy way to that realm of delights. Thou art not well here. Both the light and the darkness are about thee. Thou findest no hour like the hours of the angels. Thou seemest to be a stranger among men, and dreamest of a fair country that is far away, hoping to reach it when the day appears. With what freedom shalt thou spread thy wings when thou findest thyself in the land of peace! No weight shall then hold thee down, neither shall any plague infect thy spirit in all its path. Thou shalt be in the midst of life that is nothing but life, and gladness shall cheer thee through all the years. With the great chieftains of light thou shalt abide; thy former weariness forgotten amid the glories of the Lord. Beside the banks of peacefulness thou shalt walk, and in the bowers of love thou shalt sit down; thy medita-

tions shall be sweet, and no evil shall come near thee in all thy thoughts. Thy home shall be the one home of the good, and the joy of the Lord shall be thy strength for evermore.

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